

WILLIAM P. POPE

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is May the 17th, 2006. This is an interview with William P. Pope, P-O-P-E. What does the P stand for?

POPE: Pinckney. P-I-N-C-K-N-E-Y. It's a South Carolina name, originally.

Q: Alright. Let's kind of start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

POPE: I was born August 11, 1946, just nearby in Alexandria, Virginia.Q: Okay.

POPE: Born and grew up right down in Old Town, Alexandria.

Q: Well let's talk about; first let's talk about your father's side. What do you know about the Popes?

POPE: Well, a fair amount because my dad and my grandfather did some of the genealogy back into the 1700s; not as far as we'd like, we're going to try to get to it, my sister and I, now that I'm retired. My dad was actually here because he was a staffer on the Hill with the House Appropriations Committee. A lot of them just go up there as young people and leave, but he was one of those rare ones who stayed the whole way through and he went 30 years. And went up there in late '30s and retired in 1969 and worked mostly with Congressman Jamie Whitten, who was chairman of the House Agriculture Subcommittee and then later the full Appropriations.

Q: Yes, he was quite a figure in the agricultural field.

POPE: He was. But later also he was the Chairman of the entire Appropriations Committee.

Q: So I take it he was on the Democratic side?

POPE: He was. He was here, so I was born and grew up down in Old Town, a family that was primarily from the South, from North Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, etc., and we're still basically a southern family. But my grandfather had a very strange story. James Pinckney Pope had a really amazing story. His father was brought from Georgia where they had been living, his father had been brought to Georgia as a very small child of about three in a buckboard by his mother because she was widowed, she was the widow of a Confederate soldier around 1862. And his father was brought to Louisiana and I have never found out why they went to that area up around Ruston, Shreveport, and I don't know why, I assume there was somebody she was going to there, family. Anyway. And my grandfather was born there and he was the first one in his direct line ever to go to college. And he went to college by playing football in the early days; there weren't really very many rules and he was a pretty big man and he was a lineman for Ruston Tech, which later became Louisiana Tech, where Terry Bradshaw went.

Q: Oh yes.

POPE: And the family story, and I've never checked it out and somebody who knows football lore could probably check it, but the year he was a senior and a co-captain of the team, they upset LSU. Amos Alonzo Stagg was in the stands and recruited him to come play for the University of Chicago. Even though he had already played four years they had no rules at that point, so he went up to Chicago and played football and went to law school. So he was three more years playing and met my grandmother up there because she was from the North. And his best friend in law school said don't go back down South, don't go back to Louisiana, come West. He was from Boise, Idaho. Come West with me because that's where the future is. You know, go West, young man. This was in the early 1900s. My grandfather, James Pinckney Pope, got into Democratic politics out there and became the mayor of Boise and was elected to the U.S. Senate in the Roosevelt landslide of 1932.

Q: Wow.

POPE: And my dad had just finished his first year at Boise Junior College and he and his younger brother were brought here. And he got one look at Washington and decided he was not going back to Boise where he had been born. We had no connection with the North, with Idaho or anything; it was just a pure fluke. So Dad transferred to George Washington University and then when he got out he went to work for the government briefly and then the Hill. That's how I came to be born and grew up in Alexandria.

Q: What do you know about the family on your mother's side?

POPE: A bit. They came from England. We've got it traced back into the late 1500s, parts of it. And here name was Norford, N-O-R-F-O-R-D, and her father, my grandfather, William L. Norford, was from Albemarle County. And there's still the old home place down there in Albemarle County outside of, north of Charlottesville, northeast of Charlottesville, at around Gordonsville, out in there. And he came up to Alexandria and he was a conductor on the Southern Railway. And he bought a hotel down in Old Town, Alexandria, and renamed it the Norford Inn. It's down in the 300 block of Cameron Street, across from the old City Hall. And that's where I was brought back when I was born, to the Norford Inn, which eventually was sold and has become shops. But a wonderful old place. So I grew up down in Old Town, knew every stone. We know where everybody's buried in the family cemetery down near where he grew up so we know who all those folks are. They were all farmers.

Q: Okay. Well then, you grew up in Alexandria. What was Alexandria like then? You were there, this would be during the '50s.

POPE: Yes. I was born in 1946 and so my earliest memories were about 1950. And it was a small, sleepy southern town. Going into Washington was a big adventure. Dad went every day, but for us, driving way, way over there into Washington felt like it was far. And it was a small, sleepy southern town, everybody knew everybody. All these areas out more toward Falls Church and all that that now have an address of Alexandria, none of that existed.

Q: Yes, it was farmland.

POPE: Belle Haven Country Club on the other end had just been created, but there was no Wilson Bridge. Woodrow Wilson Bridge hadn't been built, and it was really Old Town and not much more. It was a nice place to grow up, it was safe and small.

Q: What about the social situation, I guess at that time was a Negro section and a White section.

POPE: Was.

Q: Was there much mixing?

POPE: None that I'm aware of. We had a maid who was absolutely wonderful, just like right out of, you know, like Hattie McDaniel out of *Gone With the Wind*, that kind of old fashioned, and she was like a second mother to us, we just adored her. But she lived in a different part of town. She walked in the morning and we drove her at night. And I went all the way through school, including high school, with no Black students, no Black classmates. There was a White high school and a Black high school. The White high school was called George Washington High School, GW. It's near where the Metro station is now at Mt. Vernon, Mt. Vernon Avenue. And right across from it was a completely separate school called Parker Gray, and it was the Black high school. And we didn't even play each other, to my recollection, in any sport. There weren't so many high schools around, so we played Wakefield, Washington and Lee. Mt. Vernon High School was a high school at that point, Groveton was a high school. There weren't that many.

Q: Were you aware of the impact of when the Virginia system shut down for awhile? This was after the '55 Brown versus-

POPE: Massive resistance.

Q: Massive resistance.

POPE: I only had the vaguest memories of it. I should remember a little bit more because I think it happened when I was about 10, 10 to 11. And it's funny, I've tried to remember and I just have really no recollections of it. I was just clueless.

Q: How big was your family, I mean, brothers, sisters?

POPE: Yes, I had an older brother, younger brother and a sister; we're four.

Q: Were you much of a, as a kid, much of a reader? Was this something you did or were you more into sports or what?

POPE: I'd say probably more, a little more into sports but I did read. We had books everywhere. I'm a bookaholic now but even then we had books all over the house and there were a few that really caught my fancy. I remember one about King Arthur that I read. And we had two beautiful old books; I can still seem them in my mind's eye, beautiful cloth-bound, old fashioned cloth-bound with beautiful color, *Little Women* and *Little Men*.

Q: Oh yes.

POPE: And I read both of those. And so we had books of that kind and I did read some. But of course whenever we could be out, we were out playing baseball and running around.

Q: The streets were pretty safe?

POPE: Very safe. We rode bikes everywhere. We used to play a lot down by the river because I lived very close to the river down near Jones Point where the Woodrow Wilson Bridge later was built. There was no bridge and there was an old lighthouse down there and there was the marker, the old stone marker, separating Virginia and Maryland. And it was just swamp down in there and my mother would go crazy. We used to just play down in there all the time. The Potomac was filthy; it was not clean at all. Later, when I was in high school and we rowed crew, we had to get a battery of shots before the school board would let us go out on it.

Q: What in, I'll say elementary school first, how did you take to school?

POPE: Oh, I liked it. I was, you know, president of pretty much everything and in elementary school I was eventually the captain of the safety patrols. You know those kids who wear the-

Q: Oh yes. You got your band across your chest, which was a great sign of-

POPE: And the officers had a different badge, it looked like a police badge, and the blue was a captain and I think red was a lieutenant and something else. I worked my way up through those and eventually I was the captain and I was the president of the class and the like.

Q: How about subjects? What subjects appealed to you and what ones didn't appeal to you?

POPE: Well, I always liked the liberal arts type things, reading and English, history, social studies; those kinds of things. And up through high school I was fine with the others as well, with math and science. It just wasn't what I was interested in, didn't appeal to me so much. But we didn't have the gradations back then that they have now with AP and IB and honors. We pretty much had people, as I recall, in two tracks. You were either going to college or you weren't going to college. And the people who weren't going to college, it was understood were going into blue collar professions.

Q: And there were typists.

POPE: Typists and things. And the people who were going to college, who knows what they'd become? And we took a little bit more advanced courses, but the gradations weren't so great.

Q: Back to the family, where did your family fit politically? Or was it split or what?

POPE: It was interesting because my dad was a lifelong Democrat and my mother was a very conservative Virginian and everybody else, everybody was pretty conservative in the family. And I remember my dad always complained that he was picked on because he was the only liberal in the family. And that was about true at that point.

Q: Did the War Between the States, I guess it'd be called, did that play much of a role in your upbringing?

POPE: It did. It was still alive when I was growing up. And it's funny because I'm married to a European woman I met when I was in the Foreign Service. We've been married a number of years now, and to this day she's just baffled that it could still be so present when I was growing up. It was a textbook thing for them. And literally, I mean people would talk about, in the family, would talk about the War, the War, and they weren't talking about World War II. And this was 100 years later almost.

Q: Yes, and you were in a town that was renowned as being Confederate sympathizer. In fact, the first person killed, I guess, was John Marr.

POPE: And they immediately took Alexandria, right away the North did. I can remember my mother, and this is not an exaggeration, I remember my mother used to be concerned that I would bring home a northern girl. She would always, when I was dating a new girl, she would ask, "Who are her people?" And what she meant was, she is a southern girl, right? It's inconceivable now, not that many years later really, but the atmosphere was still so southern. And when I went down to UVA in Charlottesville, I also tell this to my wife and she just can hardly imagine it, when I went down to UVA and there would be football games, this was in the '60s, and there'd be football games, and when the National Anthem was played everybody would stand up very politely and then the band would break into Dixie. And the place went crazy; it was a sea of Confederate flags, everybody singing Dixie at the top of their lungs. But the enthusiasm level, from politeness to hysteria.

Q: Yes, I recall that. My mother, who came from quite a different background, her father was an officer with a general named Sherman.

POPE: Oh. That was a bad word in our house.

Q: She wasn't allowed to read the Little Colonel series because they portrayed a little girl on a plantation. This is during the end of the century. But no, I mean, I recall the war, the wah as you would say but I would say the war, was the Civil War.

POPE: Yes. It was still a very lively thing. And the name, Sherman, I mean, people would wince when they heard that name. That was really a much worse word than a four-letter word.

Q: Where'd your family fall religiously or was it a religious family?

POPE: Not terribly. We were Methodists, went to the Washington Street Methodist Church, which is still there down in Old Town. We went because we were sent. My father didn't go so often. He went much more in later years, and my mother sometimes. My aunt and uncle, who lived down in Old Town, were the real devout goers, and we went with them a lot.

Q: When you got to middle school and high school, where'd you go to high school?

POPE: George Washington High School in Alexandria. It's not a high school anymore; it's now a middle school. When T.C. Williams was built, later after I was long gone, they took both George Washington and Parker Gray across the street from it and made them both middle schools. And all the high schoolers were integrated in and that's when they made that movie about, Remember the Titans, that was that whole era, that was my younger brother's era. That was after my time.

Q: Well in high school, were you involved in sports, student activities?

POPE: Everything. Clubs, government, sports, social, some studying.

Q: What was dating like in those days?

POPE: Dating, it's funny, because I have the impression that young people don't date as much in the sense that we dated, that there's a lot more group stuff they do together. We dated. And you really dated one person pretty seriously and then when you broke up then she dated somebody else and you dated somebody else and you were dating that person. And you were going with, you were going with so and so.

Q: Yes. I don't think it happens today.

POPE: Not nearly as much.

Q: Actually in my time there was a lot more group stuff. It's funny how this goes.

POPE: We had cliques and groups who were different, we had the cheerleaders and the football players but they were each dating somebody within that group and we had our group and we were dating somebody, and you weren't dating other people, you were dating that one. And that's how it was done.

Q: By the time you got into high school did Washington intrude? I mean, was this the place to go, going out to Glen Echo or going to the mall or?

POPE: Glen Echo sometimes, when we were taken. Of course, it was so far and we couldn't drive yet.

Q: Was there a trolley that-

POPE: I don't remember it. There was-

Q: I think the trolley stopped at Rosslyn.

POPE: Maybe. I mean, there was a trolley, I remember the trolleys in Old Town but I don't know how far it went. We used to try to go to Washington because you could drink beer at 18. It was really watered down and all that and we tried to get fake IDs and we did. And then you tried to talk your way in. It was a lot easier because the Virginia driver's license at that point was basically a piece of green paper with something typed on it. There was no photo and it wasn't laminated. And so if you could find somebody who was 18 and had one and wasn't going to be using it that night you could take it and memorize the details and hope that the guy wouldn't notice that, you know, the guy on the license is six feet and you're five six or something. But you could at least try it. And if you tried it in enough places, you could usually get in somewhere. We were much more irresponsible, I think, than they are now. Talking about the young people going to the dogs; we went to the dogs and came back.

Q: Drugs hadn't hit the place?

POPE: None, no. I knew nothing, even through college, nothing. I was just talking to somebody about this the other day. It wasn't that I was a saint and my friends were saints; I don't know what I would have done. But we weren't confronted with it because we didn't have it. I never even saw it or knew about it until after I got out of college and then it really hit big time around 1970. Maybe it was earlier on the West Coast, I'm not sure, but around '70.

Q: When did you graduate from high school?

POPE: '64.

Q: Where were you pointed towards? I mean, you were in a college preparatory course.

POPE: Right.

Q: But did you know where you wanted to go?

POPE: UVA was always such a part of our family, my brother had gone there, and it just never occurred to me to go anywhere else. I might have applied to William and Mary, maybe. I'm not even positive. But it didn't occur to me to go anywhere but UVA.

Q: Well you went to UVA from what, '64 to '68?

POPE: Yes.

Q: What was UVA like in those days?

POPE: It was really different than later. It was a southern men's school. We wore coat and tie to class every day. There were no women except a few nursing students. But basically people dated at the girls' schools in the region and there were many. Sweet Briar, Randolph, Macon, Hollins, Mary Baldwin, Mary Washington, Longwood, etc. And we were down the road a lot. That's what it was called when you traveled instead of doing your homework, you were piled in cars, and everybody had cars. It was so different than it is now; it's hard to explain. But it was called going down the road and we jokingly referred to ourselves as "Road Scholars" because we were down the road all the time; different girls' school every night.

Q: Well you know, one hears about UVA at certain times as being a great drinking party school. Was that?

POPE: Absolutely. Did you ever see that movie with John Belushi called National Lampoon's Animal House?

Q: Yes.

POPE: The first time I ever saw that I said, "That's it! How did they get it so right?" UVA was absolutely insane when I went down there. It was a pretty decent school academically but later, around 1970, women came in, and the women are much more mature and they actually go to class and turn in papers and do things that we never really did. And they really changed the tone of that place and they put so much pressure on the male students that the whole place went from being a good regional university to, year after year, being rated one of the top public universities in the country. I love UVA and I'm a devoted alumnus of the university, but I don't believe it was at that level when we were down there. The traditions were fabulous, with Mr. Jefferson and the Lawn and all of that. But now it's at some different higher level and I think it's because of the women.

Q: What, I almost hesitate to ask, did you take courses there when you weren't on the road, down the road?

POPE: Yes. And I was always interested in government and foreign affairs. And I'm not sure why. My parents had a story that they absolutely loved for some reason. Most children don't know what they want to be. They all want to be a fireman or an astronaut or a cowboy or something. And for some reason both my older brother and I, from the time we were really small, knew what we wanted to do. He wanted to be a doctor, and he became a surgeon, and I wanted to be a diplomat. And I don't know where it came from. But my parents laugh because they were having a cocktail party one time and I came walking in and I was about four. Everybody was patting me on the head, a cute little boy, what do you want to do? And they were expecting fireman or astronaut or something like that. And I said I either want to be Ambassador to France or Governor of Virginia. I have no recollection of it, of course, but it just apparently stopped the conversation and they're looking at this little guy. And I don't know why, where that came from, but both of us were really blessed, my older brother and I, because we both were able to do the thing we always wanted to do.

Q: Well, was there any exposure while you were at the university to the Foreign Service or diplomacy?

POPE: I remember none of that. We didn't have those kinds of career days, that I remember. We didn't have the kind of really wonderful career services counseling like they have now, which are great, and also alumni connections, trying to get alumni to help recent graduates in whatever market, whether it's Washington or New York or wherever. I'm in favor of all of that and it was really minimal, if we had it. I studied diplomacy more as a subject and I got particularly interested in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and that region. Again, I don't quite remember why, but the more I read of Solzhenitsyn and-

Q: Well, this the very hot issue during this period.

POPE: Yes, very. Not too long after the Cuban Missile Crisis. I got particularly interested in Solzhenitsyn and read First Circle and all of his books and Sharansky and I got more and more interested in that. But also government; I was taking U.S. government, state government and pretty much focusing on that kind of thing. My backup, if I didn't get into diplomacy, was something like politics or the Hill. My dad had been on the Hill. He was not political, he was a staffer, but my grandfather had been, and so my backup was something along those lines.

Q: Well, how did you find the faculty? Because I think it would have been difficult with the faculty if you have a student body that's, you know, girl oriented or something like that, party oriented. How did you find the faculty?

POPE: Oh, they were great. We had a number of highly known people in various disciplines. And in fact, I don't mean to overplay that. It was a fine university and you couldn't get a degree without doing something. There were some of us who were a little bit less serious and a little more party-oriented and others who were very, very serious and went on to fine graduate schools, etc. I was just making the comparison with now; not only UVA but all of the schools. The young people are so much more serious now. And from the first day they walk in, they can't mess around like we did. They've got to really do it or they'll be out in a semester. We could fool around a lot and still skate by, but not everybody did. There were some people who were very serious students.

Q: By the time you were getting close to being a senior in '68, two movements were going. One was sort of the hippie, free speech movement and the other, well three, the anti-Viet- the war one and the civil rights one. How did these intrude or did they?

POPE: Not very much. We were still cocooned. I was aware of them and everybody was shocked when Bobby Kennedy was killed and Martin Luther King. But looking back, it seems like we were still very cocooned. I don't remember any demonstrations or anything.

Q: Had UVA integrated at all or was it token or what?

POPE: Very few African Americans I can remember. There were some but not a full scale representative campus like there is now.

Q: What about, was there a fraternity system?

POPE: Very strong.

Q: Was this the engine that drove the parties and all?

POPE: Not exclusively but yes.

Q: Well what were you pointed out beyond? I mean, were you in ROTC?

POPE: I was.

Q: And how did that play out when you graduated in '68?

POPE: Well first of all, first of all I didn't graduate in '68. That was the class in which I was supposed to graduate. But for a variety of reasons, the Academic Dean decided that it would be a good idea for me to go into the Army and so I actually went into the Army as an enlisted man for a couple of years and didn't finish with ROTC. And then I came back.

Q: Was this academic pretty much or getting maturity on at all or?

POPE: It was basically academic because I just wasn't doing the job. I was skating by but it was pretty non-serious. And so I went in the Army, came back out and then I did well. I actually got a degree in January of '72.

Q: There's nothing more maturing than just a couple of years in something like the military usually helps. What did you do in the military?

POPE: I was a linguist, a Russian linguist.

Q: Did you go to the Army Language School?

POPE: I went to DLI, the Defense Language Institute out in Monterey, California.

Q: Oh yes. Well, we're fellow graduates. I graduated from DLI from Monterey back in 1951, to give you an idea. But I had just graduated from college and the Korean War started and we were loaded with college graduates taking a language at the time. How did you find it?

POPE: I loved it; I loved the study of the language. I was good at Russian. All our teachers were native speakers, of course, and some of them were so interesting because they were still, because that was far enough back, that was in '69, '70, '71, in that period, and they were interesting because some of them had memories of the Czar, had memories of that period. There was one, for example, whose father had been, if not the commander of the Czar's personal bodyguard at least at a high level. I think he might have even been the commander. And I remember asking him one time, "Did you ever actually meet the Czar?" Because he would have been a child when they left. "Did you ever actually meet the Czar?" And a misty look came into his eyes, and he was in another place. And his voice was choking and he said "Czar. Czar of all Russia. Czar. Many times." I think we must have been speaking English because I remember he looked at me with these eyes and said, "Many times as close as you to me, Czar of all Russia, you to me." And he just, he was almost crying. And the others all had fascinating stories, too. That was really an interesting group.

Q: I spent a year there. I was in the Air Force. Where did they assign you?

POPE: I actually ended up staying in the States the whole time. And was in different places, in Texas, in different places doing things having to do with Russian language.

Q: Did this give you a further feeling for the Foreign Service?

POPE: Oh yes. Absolutely. I looked on it as an opportunity to have more credentials to get into the Foreign Service.

Q: Were you finally getting anything, by this time were you getting any information about diplomacy and the Foreign Service and all?

POPE: Not while I was in the Army, not so much. But I still knew that's what I wanted to do. I don't know why, I don't know how. I still knew it's what I wanted to do.

Q: Well you came back after two years, is that it? So this would have put you up to 1970.

POPE: Yes, it was around '70. And I had about a year to finish. And so at the end of '71 I was off schedule, off cycle, finished the work and then I remember getting the degree January of '72. And then moved up to DC and went to work as a civil servant in April of '72 at the State Department. I had gotten a job in the Passport Office, that was my first job. I was a Passport Examiner.

Q: How'd you find that?

POPE: Well, it was production line work. But that was okay, because I was in.

Q: Was Frances Knight there?

POPE: Frances Knight was the legendary leader, and there were lots of stories floating around. I was so low and so new on the totem pole I had no idea what was true. But yes, she was legendary. I don't think I ever even saw her, we just sort of heard about her, sort of like if you had been a low-level FBI employee and had heard about J. Edgar Hoover. But I never saw her.

Q: Well, in the first place, did the, particularly the anti-Vietnam War protests and all, did that have any impact on you at all while you were in school?

POPE: None.

Q: How did you feel about the war?

POPE: I never protested or marched or anything, and I basically bought the arguments about the communists wanting to destroy us. I was less persuaded, though, about whether Vietnam itself was worth American lives. Not the broad principle. I felt Europe definitely was and we had to do whatever was necessary to keep them from invading and successfully overrunning Western Europe. I just remember wondering whether it was worth it if the Vietnamese weren't all fighting for themselves. Some were and some weren't. Was Vietnam worth it?

Q: Well then, did you, when you were working in the Passport Office, were you able to, you were sort of inside the beast but were you able to find out more about how you get into the Foreign Service?

POPE: Oh yes, sure. First thing I did was move over to main State because I was then able to look at job openings. And I found a job doing Eastern Europe and Soviet affairs in INR. And I moved over to become an analyst in INR. About half the people I worked with were Foreign Service. Everything I heard and knew confirmed that I really wanted to try it so I took the exam.

Q: And did you pass it the first time?

POPE: Yes.

Q: How did you do on the orals?

POPE: I didn't pass the first time.

Q: Do you recall any of the questions that were asked then?

POPE: No, I don't. I was very shocked and disappointed at not passing the orals the first time. In fact, because I remember feeling that the written exam, was much harder than the SATs. And I remember thinking this was very hard and if I pass this, I got a notification you've passed the written exam and I thought, well the oral must be kind of a formality. And it wasn't. I just remember it was very hard and I didn't pass the first time on the oral. And I was shocked, disappointed, I was puzzled because I was sure that if I can pass that written, I'll skate through the orals. So I took it again the next year and passed the written again and took the orals and passed.

Q: Did you get any sort of training or were you able to figure out what you could do on the oral to make it better?

POPE: Not training but the only thing I can remember is I had the impression coming out of the first oral that I wasn't really up to date enough on current affairs. Fairly up-to-date living in Washington, reading The Washington Post every day but somehow not quite broadly enough up. And so I think I began to read newsmagazines more and Foreign Affairs and I think I began to broaden out some. And whether that had an effect the second year or whether I just hit a panel that I worked better with, I don't remember. But whatever the reason was, somehow I made it on the second time.

Q: You came in when?

POPE: In November of '74.

Q: By this time essentially Vietnam was over.

POPE: Yes.

Q: How did you find the A-100 course?

POPE: Easy. It was very basic. I don't know too much about it now but I have the impression from little bits I've heard that it's much more sophisticated now, much broader.

Q: How'd you find the mix of people and all that?

POPE: Oh, I had a very impressive group of people in the A-100 course. They were smart, impressive, and many of them went on to have very good careers.

Q: Did you have any feel of what you wanted to do?

POPE: In the Foreign Service?

Q: Foreign Service, yes.

POPE: I think I was still focused on Soviet Union, Eastern Europe at that point.

Q: So what happened? What was your first assignment?

POPE: Ah. That was funny. Because I'd been in a couple of years as a civil servant and had all the clearances, because I was working in INR and I had every clearance known to man and everything, it was a lot easier to deal with me than with new people who had come from all over the country and who, most of whom knew nothing about the State Department. I knew the building and people and I was a little farther along than many of them in terms of being settled in. And I remember there was a situation in Botswana, which turned out to be my first post. Botswana, where there was a JO job, junior officer, position that had been vacant for quite a long time. And they really needed somebody quickly and they couldn't wait. And I remember my assignments officer saying something about Botswana. I said, uh, Botswana, yes, give me a minute, let me see if I can figure it out. It sounded like it could be Africa but I wasn't sure. I knew nothing about Botswana, zip. And he said, it's right here, and he pointed it out and I said all right, we'll do that. We had a ball, we loved Botswana, it was a great post. One of only a couple of true democracies on the whole continent at that point. Sir Seretse Khama was the president, old Bechuanaland. And it was an ideal spot because I always wanted to be a political officer. When we came along you actually had to select what cone you were competing in for the written exam.

Q: Yes, it changes.

POPE: I'm pretty sure. And I remember somebody saying, "Don't do that, don't select Political because there are thousands and thousands of people in that, do something else and then change cones." But I just remember that political work was the only thing I ever wanted to do. And so I went ahead and did it and somehow was lucky enough to become assigned as a political officer. And Botswana was a paradise for a political officer because you had the uprising in Soweto and the townships in 1976, you had the war going on in Mozambique, war in Rhodesia, war in Angola, and it was like being in the eye of the hurricane, being in Botswana. And it was peaceful, the school was good.

Q: You were in Botswana from when to when?

POPE: From '75 to '77.

Q: The capital of Botswana is?

POPE: Gaborone.

Q: Gaborone.

POPE: Most people say Gabarone.

Q: Who was ambassador over there?

POPE: The first ambassador was a gentleman named David Bolen. And then he left and had Don Norland as the second, whom I still see. Just saw him a few days ago over at AFSA.

Q: Can you talk about Gaborone and what it was like there?

POPE: It really was a different world. It was a tiny, dusty desert town with one little shopping mall down the middle, meaning an outdoor kind of a street with shops facing onto it. The Embassy was above an Indian dry goods store in rented space. And the Chinese were there. They were building the Tanzam Railway and we were very concerned about the Chinese. And Sir Seretse was the President and his wife was Ruth, Lady Ruth Khama, a British woman, and they were the embodiment of how racial tolerance could work, those two. And they had children who were well known in this little town. It was a little town, just a few thousand, a few thousand people, and the parliament was wonderful. Being in a small post like that on my first assignment I was actually able to be Chargé ½ a couple of times as a brand new Third Secretary. And it was fun because once the Ambassador, it was probably between ambassadors, and the DCM (deputy chief of mission) was away and I was able to represent the Embassy at the opening of Parliament. And it was wonderful, a breath of fresh air on a continent full of dictators where people were massacred and disappeared, etc. Botswana had a completely free system, free opposition press, and the things that the opposition said, both in parliament and out of parliament on campaigns about the "government's inept and corrupt" and this and that. You'd have been shot in most other places at the time. It was wonderful.

Q: Well looking at this, what was sort of the embassy consensus of why did this happen, this particular place?

POPE: I don't remember that we ever came up with a good answer. It was partly, of course, enlightened leadership. A lot of it depends on people. And you didn't have a Robert Mugabe, who has descended into despotism. And also you didn't have a kleptocracy, either. You had good leadership and a democratic tradition. It helped that Sir Seretse was also the hereditary leader of the largest tribal grouping as well. He was the chief as well as the political president. It was just enlightened.

Q: Now, we had, just looking at the area, you say it's an eye of the hurricane. Were there any resident ANC (African National Congress) or the southern Rhodesian opposition?

POPE: There were.

Q: What was happening there?

POPE: To my recollection, there was nothing happening other than just representation. Sort of like for years the PLO would have representation in different capitals. But I can't remember anything happening. Up north, along the borders there were some refugee camps that were populated very heavily by young men and I did manage to get into a couple of those. As far as I can recall, I can't remember anybody carrying guns or any kind of training going on or anything. It was kind of like a parking station, but I'm sure some of those people managed to get out and go back to either Rhodesia or Mozambique, wherever they had come from.

Q: What about the Chinese? What were they up to?

POPE: It's funny, they were there in fairly surprising force. And I don't remember that they ever actually did anything. Our focus was north with the Tanzam Railway. And I remember they were there in fairly significant numbers but in looking back on it I don't remember they ever did anything. I don't think they had any real impact in the place.

Q: Well this is sort of the story I've got from people who served in Africa, the Chinese had considerable representation in the continent, outside of buildings and either railroads or stadiums or something like that, that seemed to be it. I mean, they kind of went there, did their building and then stayed within their compound.

POPE: That's about it. I don't remember they even built anything in Botswana that I can recall. They must have done something but I don't recall it.

Q: Did the Soviets have representation there?

POPE: I do not recall a Soviet embassy there. Chinese for sure.

Q: South Africans, were they intrusive or?

POPE: They were the elephant on the edge of the room. They were always, everything was done with them in mind, like Finland to the Soviet Union. So they could have been, they could have been a lot more intrusive. And every now and then, there was some kind of a small raid on an individual but no real big interventions while I was there. Certainly nothing like Namibia, which they occupied for a long time.

Q: Were you single at the time?

POPE: No, I was married.

Q: How did that- I would think it would be, well, it could be fun or not so fun for a young couple.

POPE: It was paradise. We had two small children, we played tennis, there were lots of pools and people grilled out all the time and had parties. The Brits were fun, the Batswana joined in. There were some Australians there, and a small but fun international community. It was outdoor living and we were out all the time and we had a ball. A small town.

Q: Did the outside world intrude at all? No menaces from the Libyans or?

POPE: Nothing. It was idyllic and like my hometown when I was growing up. We were not very aware. It was wonderful. I never felt any threat. The only threat was snakes. Snakes were a real threat. There were some very serious snakes. But in terms of political, nothing.

Q: Well, I acknowledge Botswana comes through The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency.

POPE: That's why it's so much fun to read, having served there. It really catches the flavor of it.

Q: I would think it would, I mean, from what you say.

What about, well, did you get any feel that you wanted to be an African hand as opposed to a Soviet hand by this time or not?

POPE: I think I was kind of ambivalent but not, no, I still wanted to go somewhere else. In fact, I went to Yugoslavia next and I think I still was gravitating more in that direction. But I loved the first post. I felt like I honestly had a better posting than my A-100 classmates. I remember that moment when it's sort of like the high schoolers getting their college acceptances, the moment when everybody in A-100 found out where they were going. And I can remember a couple of people, "Botswana? Botswat? We're going to Paris; we're going to serve on the visa line in Paris." I did so much more and learned so much more in a small post doing almost everything. But we had a little USAID mission, we had Peace Corps so I learned about those even though I wasn't responsible for them. I ran a small USIS (United States Information Service) library, because we had one that was an adjunct to Pretoria even though there was no USIS officer. I was everything as the most junior guy on the totem pole, and I got to travel around and go to parliament and meet the president, etc. These people who went to the visa line on the first tour ... Paris is always glorious, Paris is Paris, but in terms of the professional development, I don't think anybody got a better first tour than I did.

Q: Well then, you were assigned to, what? Zagreb or Belgrade?

POPE: Zagreb. It was my only time at a consulate.

Q: Did you take Serbo-Croatian?

POPE: I did, over in one of those high rise buildings in Rosslyn. And again, we had native speakers and they were excellent.

Q: Who were they?

POPE: Father Milosevic and a lady who was really terrific, I liked her so much, can't remember her name. Very lovely, very classy lady. And again, I liked it. I was good at it and it turned out to be, in retrospect, my best language; I was a four-four.

Q: Were you learning Serbian or Croatian?

POPE: More Serbian, but since I was going to Zagreb I made a point of trying to ferret out the Croatian dialect ijekavski so I could speak ijekavski when I got there and not ekavski. And they appreciated it. And when I went to Serbia later I just switched to ekavski. So it was okay.

Q: You were in Zagreb from when to when?

POPE: 1977 to '79.

Q: What was the situation like in Yugoslavia at that time?

POPE: Well there was a lot of concern about the Soviets because of Prague '68 and also Tito was getting up there in age. And I think people really felt that the Soviets wouldn't dare do anything to bring Yugoslavia back into the fold while Tito was alive. But since he was getting up into his 80s, people were concerned that the day he died, Soviet tanks would roll. And they had elaborate plans to go to the mountains and to retrieve stocks of weapons to fight them. They knew they couldn't protect the plains, the north of, up toward Hungary north of Belgrade, but there are lots of parts they-

Q: The Crimean Plain and all that.

POPE: There were lots of parts of Yugoslavia they felt, the mountains especially, they felt they could defend and they could really give the Soviets a hell of a time.

Q: What about, how stood the situation from this '77 to '79 period regarding Croatia nationalists?

POPE: That was interesting. I was really struck. I knew it but sometimes you don't really feel it until you get there. The Croats and the Serbs really did not like each other. And I can remember a conversation with a guy who was really smart. He was a young, very sophisticated Croatian lawyer and he'd been to the U.S. and to Canada and he'd been to Australia, he'd been all over the world; he'd never been down to Belgrade. I said, "But, it's only four hours down the road and that's your capital." He said, "Not my capital, not my capital, that's the Serbs' capital." And I remember saying something like, "You know that in the United States we had a civil war and it took a hundred years, but we got over it. You've got to stop fighting World War II." And I can remember, he said, "World War II? What are you talking about? We're talking about the Battle of Kosovo Polje; we're talking about 600 years. And we're never going to forget, we are never going to be satisfied until we are independent." He wanted nothing to do with the Serbs. And I got the same thing from Serbs. Croatian nationalism was very much alive.

Q: You were the Political Officer there?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Who was the Consul General?

POPE: The Consul General was Olaf Grobel. Dick Christensen was the deputy. Again, I was the next man on the totem pole.

Q: Did you find that- in the first place, did the Croatian immigrant community in the United States, particularly in the Midwest and out in California, did that intrude on you much? I mean, were you getting people coming in and spouting Croatian nationalism?

POPE: I don't remember that so much. Maybe. I may be not remembering but it doesn't leap at me. There was a feature that I didn't understand well enough that really jumped out at me. It was my first real experience with the Catholic Church. Now, of course, it's on everybody's mind with the great pope, Pope John Paul II, who has just died who became a really major role figure and all this business with The Da Vinci Code and all of that. I had not understood it well enough and I was really shocked to be in a communist country where the Church had as much power as it did. That was really surprising to me. The Cardinal in Zagreb was a major player and Tito knew it.

Q: Well you know, one of the problems going back to the time of early Tito and Cardinal Stepinac. At this point was the Cardinal preaching Croatian nationalism or anti-orthodoxy or?

POPE: Not so much but it was understood that it was there as an undercurrent. And the Church, as I recall, was really demanding a big say for not preaching more of what you are saying, was demanding a big latitude, no political interference in priests or policy or property or any of that. As long as you left us alone we're not going to foment any kind of major rebellion. It was a standoff.

Q: Well, as a political officer in Zagreb in a tense time, I mean, the Church had played such a role in World War II, not a very pleasant role but anyway.

POPE: That's right. And that was very much on peoples' minds, that was still very fresh.

Q: I would think that we would, I mean one, we would want to watch them and two, we would want to be very careful because we've got our own Church in the United States which has political, you know, we were reporting on a Catholic Church being beastly, this wouldn't sit very well in some American circles. I mean, did you feel this at all?

POPE: No, not so much the American piece of it. I was just fascinated to try to understand more about the role of the Church in Croatia and Slovenia, the principal Catholic parts, and to try to begin to peel the layers away to see what kind of role they were playing, what kind of international relations they had, how much, how far the Cardinal and the hierarchy could go and what kind of dance they were doing with the authorities in Belgrade. It was really interesting to watch it. And the other thing was that it was so openly strong. Catholicism wasn't crushed at all. In fact, it was crushing communism because I remember stories, I never personally saw any of it, but stories that priests would tell of the knock on the back door of the church late at night and there would be an army officer there, an army officer and his wife and they'd be holding a little child. They'd be looking over their shoulders and they'd whisper, "We need to have this child baptized." The priest would answer, "But you don't believe in God." "Well, no, but Babushka the grandmother won't look after the baby unless you baptize it, unless it's baptized in the Church." So these children would get baptized or else grandma wouldn't look after them. And they eventually prevailed.

Q: How did Slovenia fit into this?

POPE: Slovenia was extremely advanced economically. Croatia was next but Slovenia was really, really advanced and it was overwhelmingly Catholic, even more than Croatia. Slovenia was 99 percent; Croatia was, I don't know, 97.5 or something. And very sophisticated. And they really didn't want to be part of Yugoslavia, I remember that. There were some Croats who probably were sort of okay with it because Tito was a Croat, of course, and they were sort of okay, some Croats were. But the Slovenes really, really wanted to an independent country and part of Western Europe. They just looked at the rest of them, especially beyond Croatia as just from some other planet; used a different alphabet and were a different religion, because they were orthodox. And so they were the first to go and the happiest about it.

Q: How did Bosnia-Herzegovina fit into this when you were there?

POPE: It was really interesting. I didn't get so involved with that until the next phase when I got transferred down to Belgrade. That was '79 to '81. And that was interesting because I was doing primarily foreign policy reporting, but I had one internal reporting responsibility and that was Bosnia-Herzegovina. And I made a lot of trips down to Sarajevo and that place was fascinating, Sarajevo was an intellectual ferment kind of a place and it was filled with artists and writers and painters. But it was basically, especially the Muslim nationality, the way it was understood in Tito's Yugoslavia was really an artificial construct. It was meant as a way to balance the Serbs and the Croats, to have a kind of third balancing mechanism against the Serbs and the Croats. And it was understood that, of all of the different republics of the old Yugoslavia, Bosnia was always the most difficult, it was a balance place. And it was always, it was difficult because Slovenia was overwhelmingly Slovenes, Croatia was Croats, Serbs, but Bosnia-Herzegovina was a different animal. It was Yugoslavia in miniature.

Q: Did you get down into the enclave of Croatian settlement in, well, Herzegovina, I guess.

POPE: Yes, sure.

Q: I mean, did you get the feeling while you were in Croatia that they were looking forward to taking over a sizeable hunk of Bosnia?

POPE: Not so much, not yet. It was a little early. They had great empathy for them, but no, I think it was early for that when I was there.

Q: Did you get any feel for in Croatia the political class? Were they sort of a nominal communist but really working on more of a different system?

POPE: Yes. Exactly. First of all, in Slovenia and Croatia, they were really much more Western. They used the Western alphabet, they were Catholics, they were much more westernized and they were no more committed communists than any other place. That's what the system was and you had to get along inside the system. But I don't believe, especially in those two republics, there was ever a committed communist. They were just trying to go along and get along. And a lot of them were entrepreneurs; they'd go from the party to running a big factory, big enterprise. They probably, a lot of them became millionaires, I would bet, after Yugoslavia came apart and Croatia and Slovenia became independent. Because most of the productive capacity was in those two and they used to grumble like hell about sending a lot of their revenues to the poorer southern parts; "We work and they take the money."

Q: How was the United States viewed in Croatia in this period?

POPE: Oh well, we were very positive. Just for our history and our tolerance of religion and our going against tyranny and wanting to contain the Soviet Union. Because they were petrified of the Soviet Union, of course.

Q: When you moved over to Belgrade, what were you doing there?

POPE: Political Section.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

POPE: Larry Eagleburger.

Q: And DCM was?

POPE: Jack Scanlon.

Q: Say you had the foreign policy thing. First place, how'd you find going to Serbia, I mean going to Belgrade? I mean, was it a jolt?

POPE: Not too much. Certainly the Croats considered themselves superior to the Serbs. They used to tell this joke about why are the Turks so backward? Because they were associated with the Serbs for 500 years. And the Serbs in their turn would tell jokes about the Croats. But Belgrade was the capital and there was a large diplomatic community, many, many countries had relations, more than probably they would have if they hadn't been such big players in the non-aligned movement. So not such a jolt. And I could already read the language because of Russian. So I could read and the Croatian and Serbian languages aren't very different, it's like British English and American English. They say they're two different languages. They're not. It's the same language; it's just different accents and some words different. Just like we and the Brits, we'll say truck and they'll say lorry. Or we'll say elevator and they'll say lift. The Serbs and the Croats had some words different.

Q: Yuhan Supa.

POPE: Yes. And bread, kleb and kruh. That kind of thing for bread. But it's still basically the same language so it wasn't too difficult. What I liked is being at the Embassy. I always wanted to be at embassies and having been once at a consulate, that confirmed that I always wanted to be in embassies after that because it was the center of the action. Consulates were a little bit of an afterthought.

Q: What was the political situation with Tito? I mean, was there sort of a scurrying around and people trying to line themselves up for when Tito went? What was the feeling?

POPE: There was a lot of apprehension about the Soviets. And I think that at one level a lot of people felt that Tito would never die. I remember he was 87 and there was a joke going around, "What will Yugoslavia be like in 20 years?" And the joke was "Well, first of all, Tito will be 107." And I guess a lot of people just felt he would never die and so the issue would never have to be faced. The other thing is, I think at least the Party people were all desperate to figure out some way to hold it all together. And a lot of people below that felt that there's no way it could be held together unless the Soviets invaded and then they would pull together in some way to fight them but over the long run it couldn't hold together. I don't remember anybody thinking it was going to happen the way it did, as violently, with as much violence as it did. But a lot of apprehension I remember.

Q: Was Milosevic at all a figure?

POPE: Don't remember.

Q: We've talked about most of the things there but I would like to ask you about were there any foreign policy initiatives taken, were you seeing any work on trying to do something to keep the Russians from coming in? And was this a political issue or what other issues were we dealing with and I guess also did Kosovo raise its head at all? We'll talk about that.

POPE: Okay.

Q: Great.

POPE: Good. Thanks.

Q: Okay. Today is the 26th of May, 2006.

Were there any foreign policy initiatives or programs or something going on at this time? Because is your bag, wasn't it?

POPE: I was still pretty far down in the food chain. There may have been some things that Ambassador Eagleburger and others were involved in that I don't remember. For us, honestly it was more of a watching brief to see how this new rotating presidency would manage and whether they could persuade the Soviets to stay out. There was a lot of fear because of Afghanistan, of course, and other things that had happened in Europe like Czechoslovakia before. But particularly the most recent was Afghanistan. I remember there was a lot of gallows humor going around. How much is the cost of a tram ride in Belgrade? Two kopeks. Instead of the Yugoslav currency.

Q: The dinar, yes.

POPE: Yes, there was a lot of gallows humor. And it was more of a watching brief to see whether they would, because it was really all non-entities in this alleged rotating presidency which held for a little while but not very long. But of course the Soviets, in retrospect looking back, had plenty of problems of their own at that point. They had huge problems like we do now.

Q: Well, by this time was the non-aligned movement, which Yugoslavia had been very prominent in, was it dead?

POPE: No, I don't think so. I remember it was still a concern and we were delighted that Tito and Yugoslavia kept its, even though they were communists, at least they kept their independence from the Warsaw Pact and he took opportunities to make very clear his unwillingness to be subjugated to the Soviet Union. And we were all for that, we wanted as much of that as possible. But I remember a countervailing but not predominant issue was the non-aligned movement and it was frustrating. In the United States, there was a lot of feeling that the UN itself, the United Nations was not a very balanced organization and there were so many little countries leaning towards the Soviets and so reflexively anti-American. Or took the other side of issues, whatever it was. And it was a little bit like that. There was real frustration at this so-called non-aligned movement, which looked suspiciously to a lot of people, including me, looked really much more aligned than non-aligned.

Q: Well, it basically was, I mean.

POPE: It was, and it was frustrating. In the end of the day, compared with the big issues of whether the Soviet Union would survive or not survive, it was relatively of secondary importance. But at the time, when that's one of the main things you're working on, it's frustrating. They were so imbalanced with Indonesia and other countries.

Q: What about relations with oh, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania?

POPE: You mean Yugoslavia's relations?

Q: Yugoslavia's.

POPE: Oh, they were very good all the way around, they had good relations. And I don't know exactly how the Soviets felt about it at the time, given the Warsaw Pact, but I have the recollection that Ceausescu and others were trying to find some wiggle room to have good relations with Yugoslavia. Of course, there were lots of reasons with Romania, for example, and Hungary, ones they shared a common border with; they had river issues and the dam they were working on together and all that.

Q: Well now, I can't remember if we covered it or not, but Tito's health during the time you were there, did it give way? I mean, how stood Tito? Or was he gone by then?

POPE: When I arrived in '77, as far as anyone knew he was in fine health, he was in complete control. And I guess later, I don't remember the exact timing, I moved down to Belgrade in summer of '79 to go into the political section there, and he died I think in May of '80. So by that point it was beginning to be obvious that he was more frail and people were concerned. And I remember there was one bout of something that he had that concerned people a lot and then he appeared to rally and seemed much closer to the old Tito and people relaxed and then he suddenly died. And that's in particular when there was so much apprehension. None of these other individuals who were moving into this rotating presidency, none of them were really figures of any stature compared to Tito. There was only Tito. And there was a lot of worry about how it would all come out, not just the Soviets but was this any kind of a formula for governing.

Q: Well you know, having been in Croatia before, were there noises coming out of Croatia that you recall that, you know, it's getting ready to split or not?

POPE: No, not yet, not quite. But, that had always been there. I think I mentioned the last time we met about this friend of mine who'd been all over the world, a Croatian lawyer, and he refused to go down the road to Belgrade. "I'm never going until I need a passport to go and a visa, until we're independent." And so there was that feeling, they never wanted to be part of it, the overwhelming majority. There may have been a few who were true believing communists who believed in the SFRY (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) but not so many. But I don't remember, I think it was a little premature at that point. I think it was felt that it would last for awhile.

Q: You mentioned the SFRY, this is the Socialist Republic-

POPE: Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. I'm sure there were a few people who believed in that but most of the overwhelming people, particularly in Slovenia and Croatia, they wanted nothing to do with it.

Q: Did you find there was a difference in attitude at the embassy in Belgrade about Yugoslavia? I mean, more Serb-oriented or not?

POPE: I don't remember that, more Serb-oriented. It was a fascinating time to be there, with all the fears generated and particularly out of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. And then Tito's becoming obviously more frail. It was a fascinating time to be there and then his death and the attempt to hold together some kind of a unified front. No, I don't remember that.

Q: Did you get to travel much?

POPE: You mean inside?

Q: Yes.

POPE: Sure. I was doing primarily the foreign policy reporting. I had one internal responsibility. We also traveled, of course, just as a family, for vacation up to Slovenia and we went down to Greece and by doing that we went through various parts of, south of us, like Macedonia, for example. So, sure.

Q: How did the Iranian hostage crisis strike in Yugoslavia or was there much interest in that?

POPE: That's a good question. You mean on the part of the Yugoslavs and the government?

Q: Yugoslavs, yes.

POPE: Well, it was a huge story, a huge story everywhere. And I don't remember any particular sympathy for that kind of behavior. There was a certain amount of sort of Third World sympathy or whatever you want to call it, non-aligned developing world sympathy, but Yugoslavs had embassies everywhere and a rather sophisticated foreign ministry and foreign policy and their people had been, had traveled a lot and I don't think there was a shred of sympathy anywhere for taking embassies hostage like that. I don't recall it.

Q: Well then, you left there in?

POPE: '81.

Q: '81. By the way, how did the, what were you getting from your diplomatic and Yugoslav colleagues about the election of Ronald Reagan? Did that come as sort of a shock?

POPE: I don't remember. I don't know how shocked they were, at least the people I knew, particularly the foreign ministry people. Again, many, many of them had served in Washington and spoke English and had some concept of the United States and they understood our peculiar way of doing politics. They had their own peculiar way of doing politics, so. I don't remember any huge shock about that. There probably was, in retrospect, if I think back; that was a long time ago now. But if I think back there probably was because they probably felt that Jimmy Carter was somebody they- he came out there while I was there. And I think he was well received and viewed as being sympathetic toward broader kinds of things that the Yugoslavs were interested in so probably that he wasn't reelected probably was a surprise to some people.

Q: Did human rights, was this at all an issue in Yugoslavia?

POPE: Well, we raised it. There was the human rights report and we always contributed.

Q: Well, there weren't a lot of, if I recall-

POPE: No, because everybody we knew had a passport and traveled and went abroad. For example, they went to Trieste a lot, they went to Trieste to shop. And they had foreign currency and passports and they came back. There wasn't any such thing as a defection. If you didn't want to live in Yugoslavia, you wanted to move to Canada, if you could get an immigrant visa to Canada, you moved. That's all. And so it was different from, it was sort of communist but not really. There were some people who were deprived of something, job or briefly imprisoned or something, but it was at a different scale than in the Warsaw Pact, in particular the Soviet Union with the gulags and all that. It certainly was not a democracy. But again, it was a different scale. So yes, sure, that was one of the issues that we talked about, freedom of the press and that kind of thing. They had, again for a communist country, they had quite an amount of freedom of the press but it was below the Tito and party level. But the papers in Zagreb and Belgrade roasted the local officials. I remember they had one, in Zagreb they had one wonderful cartoonist who would have been a hit anywhere, his name was Pero, which meant "pen", and he was terrific. And I just remember there was one cartoon where there was a street repair crew and the boss was telling them, "Hurry up and fill in that hole, because they're digging it up again tomorrow." They just tore up the local officials all the time. So it was quasi-free by comparison with points east.

Q: Well then you left in '81. Whither?

POPE: Back to Washington.

Q: What job did you have?

POPE: I was the Libya Desk Officer. It was interesting because I had gone in to ask Ambassador Eagleburger what I ought to do and I remember he suggested that an obvious next step might be to be a desk officer. And so I looked at the vacancies and I happened to see the Tunisia desk officer and I thought, well that might be kind of interesting, to learn something about North Africa, not having served in the NEA bureau before, so why not try it. So I bid on it and the next thing I know I got a call from the Office Director who said, "We're really looking forward to having you as the Libya Desk Officer in Office of North African Affairs." And I replies that there had been a mistake because the job I bid on was the Tunisia desk officer. He said, "Oh yes, but we changed that." So somebody else got that and you're the Libya Desk Officer. And I just remember being puzzled because we had no embassy there and they had no embassy and I didn't really know what I was going to do. Well, in retrospect it was a fascinating, it was a terrific job and we didn't need any embassy for it to be very interesting.

Q: You did it from '81 to?

POPE: '83.

Q: '83. Okay, let's talk about it.

POPE: It was a terrific, interesting job.

Q: What were the state of relations and why were they the way they were in '81 when you got there?

POPE: It was dominated by the fact that Qadhafi had seen what had happened in Tehran and had decided, also in '79, that he needed his own embassy takeover. The mullahs in Iran couldn't be the only ones, so Qadhafi organized schoolchildren apparently - this was before my time but I read up on it - they brought in busloads of people and told them just scale that wall and trash the Embassy. And our folks fortunately were able to get out the back door and to safety. But it was not some kind of spontaneous uprising by the people; he organized it and bussed people in to make it happen because he wanted his own embassy takeover. Well of course we broke relations and we threw them out as well and we had protecting powers. If I recall correctly, they had the UAE (United Arab Emirates) and we had the Belgians, I believe, in Tripoli. Qadhafi was pretty close to public enemy number one at that point among the non-communists.

Q: When you went there, as desk officer for Libya, what were you getting from your colleagues about Qadhafi? Was he a nut, was he a calculating person? I mean, what was going on?

POPE: Eccentric. Nut would be going too far but he was an eccentric, a mystic, much more comfortable in his tent out in the desert than in the halls of power, ruthless with opposition. But also he was a kind of a megalomaniac in the sense that he viewed himself as a major world leader, at least a major Arab leader who happened to have been born and brought into a stage that was too small for him; in fact, considerably too small. And he both wanted to conquer neighbors but also to create organizations or alliances with himself at the center of ideally the entire Arab world and if not at least all of North Africa, with himself at the center and the others circulating around in his orbit. And Chad, you know, he actually actively had troops in Chad and was working in many other areas to destabilize.

Q: Yes, I have accounts of him appearing in, I'm not sure whether it was Central African Republic or a Central African empire, whatever it was. But you know, it was gifts and all this in other places too. I mean, he was on the road a lot, I guess.

POPE: He tried to buy influence or, where he couldn't buy it, he tried to create it by destabilizing, by creating or enabling dissident movements.

Q: How did we view, this is during the time you were there, '81 to '83?

POPE: Right.

Q: How did we view Qadhafi's connection to terrorism at the time?

POPE: He was an important player. He gave refuge to terrorists, he trained terrorists, he supported terrorists; he was a state player in terrorism.

Q: What were we, in the first place, as the desk officer for a country with which we had no formal relations but a power of the Belgians, what sort of information were you getting and how did you keep track of what was happening?

POPE: Obvious ways. There were other parts of the government that were collecting information, not the State Department, but there were other people. There were the press and other allied countries that had embassies there that shared information. There were academics. It wasn't a completely closed society; there were a lot of embassies there and there were people going in and out.

Q: Did we have oil people there at the time?

POPE: I think not. My recollection was that all of that had been prohibited and in fact even before it was prohibited I think, if I recall, he threw all the Americans out. And there were a number of major U.S. oil companies that had had legitimate activities there for which they had paid that were suing. It was a very messy situation from the commercial point of view, lots of claims against Libya, wanting assets frozen in the States, that kind of thing.

Q: Well did- were we able to in a way deal with Qadhafi's government? I mean, were there contacts in other places or through other embassies? In other words, was there some sort of relationship?

POPE: No. I don't think, to my recollection there was no relationship, but there were channels. There were the protecting power channels in both directions and they would carry any messages that we wanted carried. But we really didn't have too many messages because we had laid out very clearly you need to stop supporting international terrorists, not harbor people like Carlos the Jackal, and you need to stay out of your neighbors' affairs, withdraw troops from Chad. And eventually the Chadians kicked them out. The Chadians eventually just slaughtered the Libyan military and drove them back across into Libya. But stop trying to destabilize other countries in Africa, stop interfering more directly in your neighbors' affairs, forswear terrorism, that kind of thing. And then at that point we can look at some kind of contact or relationship; it's up to you. And from time to time, I remember there'd be some kind of a message that came from some source, even private, commercial source once I remember, someone who represented a company said, basically I was given this message, I don't know what to do with it, here. And it basically said, "I don't know what you want; we don't know what you want from us." And it was tiresome in the sense that they knew exactly what we wanted; Qadhafi just didn't want to do it. He hadn't come around to the idea that-

Q: What did we want?

POPE: Well, what I just said, for him to be-

Q: Renounce terrorism.

POPE: Renounce terrorism. Not just renounce but actually stop. Renouncing is one thing but to actually stop harboring and supporting international terrorists wasn't so much the kind of terrorism we're primarily dealing with today, it was more secular, it was more Carlos the Jackal type terrorists. Stop supporting them and harboring them and helping them. Leave your neighbors alone, withdraw military forces and stop meddling in places like the Gambia and other places where he was trying to foment coups. It was crystal clear, he wasn't ready to move that way. He eventually got there but that was many, many years later.

Q: How did we see his, at that time, his ties to the Soviet Union?

POPE: I don't want to be imprecise here. My recollection is that because he was against us we probably felt he probably leaned towards the Soviets. But I don't remember that he had Soviet troops or anything like that.

Q: He wasn't considered a tool of the Soviets?

POPE: No, I don't think so. It was more somebody who wanted to be a big figure in the non-aligned movement and therefore probably was more leaning toward them than toward us. He clearly wasn't leaning toward us; we were really pretty much mortal enemies at that point after he destroyed our embassy.

Q: What about Libyan students in the United States?

POPE: I don't think there were very many. I remember there were some issues having to do with Libyan students and I think we pretty much, he either withdrew them or we withdrew them. There weren't very many. We had, I think, pretty good reason, as I recall, to think that a lot of them were not just students, were more than students. And I don't think there were very many, if any.

Q: Was Libya messing around with the IRA (Irish Republican Army) up in Northern Ireland at that time?

POPE: My recollection is that they were, that there was some kind of more financial or arms support to them. Even if I wanted to I couldn't be more precise with you but there was something, there was some, yes, I'm sure of it.

Q: What about were you there when, was it the Berlin nightclub La Belle or whatever it was?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Was that happening on your watch?

POPE: Yes.

Q: How did that play out? Could you explain what it was and what happened?

POPE: That was a Libyan intelligence operation. I don't think it's very secret any more; it came out in the paper. And in fact, the President decided for whatever reasons to actually release an intercept in which the Libyan government back in Tripoli said go do this and then the Libyan mission in Berlin came back and said, "We did and we're heroes. We did it." And a couple of U.S. servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed as I recall. It was a direct Libyan terrorist attack, not something inspired indirectly by the government of Libya.

Q: And then how did our response come about? I mean, did you get involved in our response?

POPE: That occurred after my time. The reason I remember it so well is because I was serving in Paris at that point and I was on the other end of that process about our having made a decision to retaliate once we understood and the Paris connection to all of that. So I guess that was after my time on the Libya desk, but I remember it all very clearly.

Q: Well what about-we'll come to that, then later-but how were ties between its two neighbors, Egypt and Tunisia?

POPE: They were bad, bad with both. The Egyptians, I don't remember whether they were actually worried about Qadhafi or whether it was more annoyance. I think it was more the latter. I don't think they really feared Qadhafi very much, but he proposed a merger of the two, of Egypt and Libya into some kind of, there was some name for united, you know, it was like the United Arab Emirates, it wasn't that but United Arab something and that lasted about a day and then the Egyptians-

Q: We have these damned things of-

POPE: The Egyptians dissolved that.

Q: -the Egyptians with Syria and with Yemen.

POPE: Yes. And so it was always, it was always rocky, rocky with Egypt but it was really rocky with Tunisia because I remember they were trying to destabilize, the Libyans were fooling around inside Tunisia. I can't recall exactly what they were doing, but the Tunisians were really, really unhappy with the Libyans at that point, with good reason. In fact, the Libyans didn't have good relations with anybody, Morocco, Algeria, they were supporting the Polisario. They were just a very negative, destabilizing force, both across North Africa and also south from there.

Q: Well, were you getting the feeling that France and Italy were getting quite a bit of petroleum products from there, were sort of taking a less hostile stand towards Libya than we were? And was this an annoyance?

POPE: Well, certainly the Italians had a different view toward it for many years, even recently; in recent years they've had a very different view toward Qadhafi. I'm talking about before he gave up the weapons of mass destruction. The French were a mixed bag because I think in general they had a different way of approaching these things than we did. But, at the same time, they also were very actively involved in making sure that the Chadians could withstand and eventually expel the Libyans. Active involvement of troop units moving into a Francophone country was beyond the pale for the French, but they always looked with less active concern on governments like Libya than we did.

And as far as annoyance, I don't remember any annoyance that was too serious. It was sort of like the non-aligned movement, it was our feeling toward them. It was annoying but it wasn't too critical because those were key NATO allies as well. And we had the big issue; the big issue was the Soviet Union and the Fulda Gap and all of that.

Q: If I recall with Chad, with the French help, they ended up with a hell of a lot of Libyan prisoners, didn't they?

POPE: I don't know whether hell of a lot but they had some for sure. And there were other situations that I either recall from the time or I have read subsequently where there weren't so many prisoners taken. There were potential prisoners but they ended up being more like dead Libyans. I remember reading in the press about this one unit that was swooped down on with their Chadians from all directions with their Toyota Land Cruisers. I recall that the report was that they wiped the Libyans out to the last man, just massacred this one Libyan brigade. So I don't know how many prisoners they had, but they had some, yes, they did. Could have had more, I think.

Q: Well, you left- in the first place, it must have been a hell of a lot of fun.

POPE: It was fun. It was so different than other desk officers. I was meeting people at very high levels and involved in things that I would have never done if I had been a more normal desk officer. It was a very interesting time.

Q: Did you get any feel, I'm not trying to pry secrets and all but for the role of the CIA? Were you getting good stuff from them or not or how did you feel about it?

POPE: Yes. I think, my recollection was that it was pretty good. I mean, I still hadn't been in very long, in the service. Analyzing intelligence is one of those things, even if you're not in intelligence, even if you just use it a lot, over the years as you get more seasoned, you get a better feel for it and a better sense for it. And it was all kind of golly gee for me because it was the first time I'd served in Washington. I'd been overseas up to that point. And you know, to actually go out to the CIA and to go to the White House for meetings was exciting.

Q: What did you do at the White House?

POPE: Oh, there would be meetings, briefings on what Qadhafi was doing. I don't remember any specific meetings but with the NSC (National Security Council), with the NSC person for the Middle East, and to compare notes.

Q: Well then, you were off to Paris?

POPE: No. I stayed two more years in Washington, '83 to '85, I was the Special Assistant to Chet Crocker in African Affairs.

Q: Well that must have been quite a time; he was a major player in those days.

POPE: He was. And he had the best front office. First of all, Chet was there, Chet Crocker was there for eight years, which is very, very rare, almost unprecedented. Plus, he was a political appointee, but he came in as a deep expert in Africa, published. He also was the most brilliant person I ever worked for, before or since, in terms of just sheer force of intellect. And just a terrific person, I'm a huge Chet Crocker fan. But he also had a fabulous front office. Frank Wisner was the PDAS, the Principal DAS. You must have done an oral history on Frank Wisner. If not, you certainly should. And you know his background and his dad and all of that. And then Princeton Lyman who later went on to be Ambassador in South Africa and Assistant Secretary for IO. Jim Bishop. It was a terrific, terrific front office and we had real smart office directors, Ed Perkins who went on to become the Director General of the Foreign Service, people at that level, Ed Bogosian, Bob Frasure, the late Bob Frasure, and Nancy Ely-Raphael and many other people were either in the Bureau or working on these issues. And it was really, it was just fabulous to be in AF at that point.

Q: Well then, staff assistant, what were you doing?

POPE: I was the Special Assistant. We had a couple of staff assistants.

Q: What was your job?

POPE: At one level it was the paper role, to make sure that, I was the principal link with the Seventh Floor Secretariat to make sure paper got in on time and was good quality. I was the link back and forth to the bureaucracy on the Seventh Floor Executive Secretariat. But I also sat in on all the evening meetings of the DASes, so I was like a junior DAS, not in decision making capabilities, but I was in on everything and I traveled with Chet some. Sometimes I did and sometimes I didn't. But it was a terrific view because there was a lot more going on than just Chad. Chad was a real issue, no question, Chad and other parts of Francophone Africa. But also Chet Crocker was focused on southern Africa and that was just fascinating to watch him, watch him work and sometimes to be privileged enough to go with him.

Q: Did you get any feel for the relationship between Crocker and his issues and George Shultz and Shultz's staff?

POPE: I usually wasn't in on those meetings at that point. But I remember my impression is that Crocker had very high regard for George Shultz, as did everybody else, huge regard. And I know that his issues got a lot of attention, Chet's, Chet Crocker's, particularly the southern Africa, South Africa, Namibia, the Cubans, Angola got a lot of attention on the Seventh Floor and I'm sure in the rest of Washington, as well.

Q: As you were up there did you sample that? I mean, what did this do for you vis-à-vis the African Bureau? Were you interested in getting involved in that, I mean, African specialist?

POPE: I considered it, I thought about it. I thought about it and it was one of those "see where things take me." But I was interested in Africa, I liked it, I'd had my first tour, as I mentioned earlier I had my first tour there and liked it a lot. And there's something about Africa that's very human and I enjoyed my travel around. There is poverty and sometimes it's discouraging, but there was something about it that I found very appealing. I was just so impressed by the quality of the people who were working on it, either directly in AF, the Africa Bureau or around it.

Q: Well also I would imagine that even though you're just in sort of a staff position you had the feeling that there was some progress being made, didn't you?

POPE: Oh, sure.

Q: I mean, like Chad.

POPE: Sure, sure.

Q: And southern Africa. I mean, you know, there are some places where you're just almost babysitting problems.

POPE: Right. And there were plenty of problems, but there were good people dealing with them and Crocker was determined to make some progress. And I remember at one point I said something to him like, "I know you have a good plan and I know you are doing your absolute best, but you need to be realistic that the odds are low that you're ever going to talk the Cubans into leaving Angola and the South Africans into leaving Namibia. It's worth trying and let's keep working hard at it but... And he would just not be deterred, he wouldn't give up and he in the end was successful and the Cubans sailed away and Namibia became independent and it was a great triumph.

Q: What was our feeling towards the Cubans at that time? What was in it for them?

POPE: Well, the feelings were just as negative as they could be. Cuba was interfering in so many places, not just in Africa. Africa was just one more. It was a little bit like Qadhafi, not that Castro and Qadhafi were parallel in any way, but it was the sense of too small a stage for a huge ego and even though they were surviving because of sugar subsidies from the Soviet Union, Castro still felt that he needed to fool around in South America and in Central America and even as far away as Africa. You remember the accords that ended in Portuguese granting independence to Angola and sailing away. It was supposed to be-

Q: '74 or something like that.

POPE: -it was supposed to be three-party government, of which the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertacao de Angola) was only one. And you had UNITA (Uniao Nacional para a Independencia Total de Angola-National Union for Total Independence of Angola) and the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertacao de Angola-National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and they were supposed to jointly rule. The MPLA decided for its own reasons that it would bring in mercenaries, basically, to shoot the others out and they would take sole power. At least that's how it was viewed. And we felt it was totally illegitimate for the Cubans to be in Angola without the permission of what had been the agreed-upon government. And two-thirds of that agreed-on government were fighting them. And we felt they had no business being there at all.

Q: Well, during this time what did you, you say you were sort of relaxed about where you wanted to go? I mean, how did things work out for you?

POPE: Oh, they worked out really well. I had a fabulous assignment, I had really wonderful assignments all the way across, I was really, really lucky. That one was terrific. It was a one-year assignment, the Special Assistant job and Chet asked me to stay a second year and I was delighted to do it because it was so interesting being around him, to watch him work, being peripherally involved with these issues. But also I then went off to Paris, to the Political Section because there was a Middle East watcher and an Africa watcher in Paris and a Middle East watcher and an Africa watcher in London. You were mentioning Robin Raphael she was the, I think, Middle East watcher in London at that point. And Paris was an endlessly fascinating area from which to watch Africa because there was nothing the French didn't know about what was going on in Francophone Africa. And they wanted to know lots about what was going on in Anglophone Africa and they wanted to trade off, they wanted me to brief them on things that were happening in English-speaking places. And my job was to try to get them to talk, to try to get them to share because there was no question whether they knew, because they had completely penetrated all the Francophones.

Q: Well then, you were in Paris from when to when?

POPE: '85 to '88. In the Political Section; it was absolutely great.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

POPE: The Ambassador was a gentleman from Tennessee, he was a political appointee, had been the finance chairman for Reagan, a gentleman named Joe Rodgers.

Q: Did he play much of a role in your business or were you pretty far down the line?

POPE: I was, first of all, pretty far down the line and second, he was a businessman, a very successful one, and he was much more focused on, as I recall, on trade and business.

Q: Who was the president? Was Mitterrand the president?

POPE: Yes. And he had his folks at the Elysee, including his son, Jean-Christophe.

Q: I was going to say, his son was-

POPE: Jean-Christophe was one of the advisors. The main one was a gentleman named Guy Penne in the Elysee. And it was interesting because it was the first "cohabitation" government, the President and Prime Ministers from different parties. Chirac was the Mayor of Paris for a while and then Prime Minister, and it was very interesting to watch all of that, how that all came down, even though that wasn't my primary beat. My beat was Africa, but I still was living there and watching it.

Q: Well, let's talk about this, the French government in Africa at that time, I mean, the relationship was, as you say very close. In many cases it was almost cozy from the way of oh, money and other relationships. Were we observing this and commenting on this back to Washington?

POPE: Sure. Of course.

Q: You know, one thinks of diamonds going to the Seine or to Mitterrand himself. Was this?

POPE: I don't remember that particular business.

Q: This has been sort of the accusations. But how did you feel, I mean, how about Mitterrand's son? I mean, was he the person you would see?

POPE: He was one. He wasn't the only one.

Q: How did you find the French? Were they taking and not giving or giving and not taking or how did it work?

POPE: No. I guess I was fortunate or did my job right but I had good relations across the board. Not just at the Foreign Ministry with people you would expect to be able to relate to but at the Matignon, at the Elysee and elsewhere. It seemed like the entire French government had people in various places who were Africa specialists. I got to know most of those people and was able to have interesting conversations. And it was not one-way at all. In fact, it was certainly more coming from them than went back.

Q: Well, did you find at a certain period, I think we probably were by this time in the '80s were past it but still, the French, when we first went in Africa sort of became independent thing; the French are extremely wary of the United States-

POPE: Yes.

Q: -thinking that we wanted to take over.

POPE: Yes.

Q: Which of course is the last thing in the world that we wanted to do and particularly Francophone and the Anglophone too.

POPE: You could not convince them of that, though. When I was there, they still believed that or at least they were still concerned about it. It was still a worry to them, that we somehow wanted to take over and take a lead role. I can't imagine what could make them think, that but they did.

Q: I mean, you know, the idea of the United States wanting to push the French aside in Chad or something like that, I mean, it's ludicrous when you think about it.

POPE: It was, but they were worried, they were concerned about it. And I suppose if you look at the broader world picture you can understand why. Being a member of the Security Council and their dominant position in at least parts of Africa, that was much of what was left of what had been great glory at one point. And so I guess that was something that needed to be rather fiercely protected. It just didn't need to be protected. But they didn't accept that. They were still worried about it when I was there.

Q: Yes, well, I think it's as an empire shrinks, I mean, this is true of Spain at the turn of the century on Cuba. I mean, they lost everything else and whereas normally the problems they had in Cuba could probably be- things could have been settled by accommodation. They just couldn't do it.

POPE: Right.

Q: But did you find yourself getting into long discussions about what in hell's in it for the United States?

POPE: Sometimes. Those questions were asked sometimes and others. I could just tell that they wanted us to continue to stay in the background; they didn't want us to challenge them. But yes, sometimes there were such discussions.

Q: How did they view our policy towards particularly southern Africa at this time? I mean, I would imagine that the French, being probably the most skeptical of all nations, and here was Crocker tilting at this windmill, which he eventually succeeded in overcoming or knocking down, whatever you want to call it. But as you say yourself, we're dubious about how it would come about. How were the French looking at what we were trying to do?

POPE: Like most other European countries; they had formal diplomatic relations with the Marxist government in Luanda, the MPLA. And so from that point of view, my recollection is that they felt that we were too ideological and not practical enough, that the Cubans and Marxists together had won. They had taken the capital and that's what counted and had shot their way into power and had forced the others out into the countryside. And that was just the way it is and that we ought to accept it and go forward. Of course they would want us to succeed over the long term in getting South Africa out of Namibia, if possible, and overturning apartheid in South Africa, should that ever become possible. But in terms of the most sensitive piece of it right at the time, Angola and the Cuban presence, I don't know, I just don't recall that they felt that the fact that the Cubans had come in there and upset the balance at the request of one of the three original parties so, not a big deal. That's my recollection of it.

Q: How were the French viewing, I mean, while you were there, did we get involved with the French on Libya and particularly with them messing around in Chad?

POPE: Oh yes.

Q: What were we doing and the French were doing?

POPE: We had very close cooperation on that issue. I don't recall how much of that remains classified, probably not very much of it anymore it was so long ago, 20 years ago. But there was very close cooperation in helping the Chadians drive, I mean, we didn't have troops there, I don't think the French had any troops there to my recollection.

Q: Well, the _____ had troops.

POPE: Well, but small, I mean advisors, they didn't send in armies and we didn't send in armies; the Chadians did it. But we worked closely, had very close cooperation with them on that particular issue because we both felt that the Libyans had no business with military units there.

Q: There seems to be this relationship, particularly with the French and correct me if I'm wrong, but in Africa always having coups or problems and there seems to be this thing where we've got the airlift and they've got, you know, a few spare brigades of paratroopers or something. Were you involved in any of these sort of movements of getting our Air Force to take to the French troops from point A to point B to quiet things and all that?

POPE: I don't remember about the transporting of the French troops but in the broad level of cooperation that you are talking about, their having troops available for short-term kind of putting things down in a capital to make sure that the foreigners were all gotten out, I'm sure we had some evidences of that, some situations like that, I'm sure we must have. I don't remember that we flew any French troops while I was actually in Paris and working on those issues. We might have but I don't think so. They had their own airlift.

Q: Yes. They had their own airlift and at a certain level we can put more in.

POPE: Yes. But they had enough to move their own folks around and it didn't take so many. They would bring in a Foreign Legion unit and it would quickly dominate a situation.

Q: Did you run into, I mean, looking at the French Foreign Ministry and other places you were dealing with, did you have any feel about the French both political but also the civil service system there? How'd you feel about this?

POPE: Well, some of the people I dealt with were delightful, people you'd want as friends of any nationality and some others were really, really arrogant. And I think their situation, their system, produces or at least elevates and rewards a certain amount of arrogance. That's the truth of it. I'm not French-bashing because we loved our tour there and there are some absolutely lovely, delightful people but there were some people who were very arrogant and very condescending toward the United States. They were very dismissive of us as a "very young country with no real history" and sort of semi-noble savages from the western forest and 1,000 years down the line we might begin to understand some of the deeper mysteries of the universe. But right now we're much too young and too naïve to really understand anything. That was very frustrating, as you can imagine.

Q: Did you get any reverberations or this just wasn't your bag, about the changes that were beginning to happen in the Soviet Union? You know, you had the death of several Soviet leaders and the rise of Gorbachev and all that and I was wondering whether that affected the thinking of people in the political section.

POPE: A little but it wasn't quite defined enough yet that it came through to me in Paris. There were issues in Africa that had only marginal relationship to things Soviet and Cold War. There were some that had very direct, like Angola for example, but in terms of the Soviet Union itself or the Warsaw Pact, it was just a little after. Because I left in the summer of '88, and it was really as I was leaving that that was beginning. I'm sure my colleagues were beginning to already have conversations with the French.

Q: Well, were we still thinking in terms of the quote, "Soviet menace," unquote, in Africa while you were doing this?

POPE: Yes.

Q: This was something we were really concerned with for a long time.

POPE: Yes. It was peripheral. It was one of these the game being played around the edges, because the center was still Europe, the Fulda Gap, deterring the Soviets from launching this huge conventional army across Germany, etc. But there was this game being played on the margins. Vietnam was long over, but still there was Angola and Mozambique and other places we were worried-

Q: Ethiopia too.

POPE: Ethiopia too. One of the problems, one of the things that Crocker was trying to do with the apartheid government in South Africa was to rebut the "Soviet menace." Every time he'd say, "You cannot go on like this," they would answer along the lines of "Our African citizens aren't really so discontented, it's really all a plot out of Moscow to destabilize us. You're so far away you don't understand it, you Americans." And so even there they were either using it as an excuse or had real belief that some kind of a bogeyman was coming out of Moscow and that otherwise they wouldn't be having all of this trouble.

Q: Well now then did the French have a different view of the quote, "Soviet menace," unquote in Africa?

POPE: Oh sure.

Q: How were they looking at it?

POPE: They just didn't see it as... They were well aware, they weren't stupid. They have very smart people and very fine intelligence services. They thought that we looked at it with too much of an ideological prism as opposed to a practical prism. I had the impression that they didn't think that a temporary Soviet gain was as much of a huge zero sum as we felt it was. That's the difference. Not that they weren't aware of it.

Q: Well did you find yourself, you know, after dealing with this, beginning to look at Africa with a more, I won't say French attitude or at least have a different understanding of Africa now the game was being played there before you went?

POPE: Well, I think I had more understanding of it. I think I was a little bit probably less sympathetic to the French when I came out of. I realize this is going to be made public, and as I say, they are lovely people, but I was probably less sympathetic when I came out, even though Paris is absolutely glorious. It was frustrating to be an American official there, in some ways.

Q: Was the Mitterrand government sort of playing the, I won't say anti-American but opposition to American card more than, or was this a Gaullist prerogative?

POPE: Yes, I'm not sure that they were playing it more but it was, I think, the basic direction in which they would try to maintain what they did have, which by comparison to what they'd had at one point wasn't so much, but to try to be the counter-American and try to line up others to slow us down at least. Sure. But there was also a huge amount of cooperation including later when we talk about my last assignment, which was counterterrorism. That is much more recent than the period we're talking about right now, but the French are very professional and they were not too ideological and they got it.

Q: Well, this is one of the things that I've found interesting. We've had this overt sort of public dispute with France now for, you know, maybe 225 years or what have you, but at the same time sort of in the military and intelligence side and lots of other places very much closer cooperation than with many other countries.

POPE: Yes, that's exactly correct.

Q: You know, it's, at the professional level, up to a point, and I suppose the Foreign Ministry can be a place where you can't be overly arrogant and be in the military. I mean, it doesn't work. Or in the intelligence business.

POPE: Right.

Q: But you can in foreign policy.

POPE: Exactly. And that's why I say I definitely ran into it there among some. And some were absolutely terrific colleagues. It was a mixed bag there.

Q: Well then, you left there in '88?

POPE: I did.

Q: Whither?

POPE: I went to the National War College.

Q: Ah ha.

POPE: Which was a terrific experience, because by then a lot was known. You had Gorbachev and a lot was happening. And that was a very interesting year. It was wonderful to be able to take off a year, essentially, and not have an active job with the phone ringing and a million yellow phone slips on your desk when you came back but to actually be able to read and think and hear lectures and travel a bit.

Q: This was up at Carlisle?

POPE: No, no, it was at the National War College right here at Ft. McNair.

Q: You were there from when to when?

POPE: '88 to '89.

Q: Oh, this is before certain things happened.

POPE: It was, but you could see, by then, by the time I got back and got into this a lot was becoming clearer. I remember some discussions we had that Mrs. Thatcher had become a fan of Gorbachev and said this guy's the real deal. And I remember Reagan was still looking at this and was cautious, and then you had the new Bush administration, Bush I. Everybody was still a bit cautious, trying to figure out about all of this. But I remember we had lots of discussions of the kind that, on a day-to-day basis in the Department, you're too overwhelmed and exhausted to really have. Maybe a quick talk over lunch. But at NWC we had real discussions and we had people come in, experts on the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact from the Agency and from the Hill and all kinds of places, from CRS, Congressional Research Service, to talk about what they thought they saw happening.

And I remember, I don't know whether I thought this, I hope I didn't and I believe I didn't, but I believe there were some civilian colleagues who really thought that the military was kind of bloodthirsty and that they were actually looking to have conflict, looking to be engaged in war. And I remember that some of the "hardliners" in our class were the civilians, and I was relatively hard-line at that point and pretty skeptical about Gorbachev. And some of the military people were maybe skeptical, too, but were saying conflict and war have to be the absolute last thing that we ever do. We've got to use every other possible avenue before we ever get into conflict with anybody, Soviets or otherwise. And there was a lot of looking at each other, and we weren't a bunch of left wing anti-war types and they weren't a bunch of warmongers. It was a real eye-opener for all of us, I think.

Q: During this time, was anybody looking at, well, the unification of Germany? Or was this, I mean, this is, you know, you graduated months before it unified but very few people were thinking this would happen at the time.

POPE: Yes. Including in our group. We had all grown up with the Cold War and pretty much everybody in that group had been born right about the end of World War II and the only thing we could remember was Sputnik and the competition with the Soviets and Hungary and Czechoslovakia and Afghanistan and non-military but intense competition across the globe. And there was great skepticism that this entity that had secret police and gulags and all of that could ever unravel.

Q: By this time Vietnam was some years before but the military had suffered very badly in morale and sense of purpose and the collapse in Vietnam. Did you get a feeling that the officers were talking about sort of rejuvenation of the military or not? Was this an issue?

POPE: I don't remember that. I certainly don't remember a group of people going around with their chins on the ground or discouraged in any way. These were really smart professionals who were excited about their career. Obviously, these were the select, these were the chosen ones, the ones who were going on to be generals and admirals and most of them did. But I don't remember any sort of negative fallout that was still going on 14 years later, 15 years later after Vietnam.

Q: Did you go on any trips?

POPE: We did. We sent on some small local trips, of course, like up to Gettysburg. And I just remember all of them, particularly the Army people, they loved the Civil War because it was the first modern war and the generals, particularly the Southern generals were all so brilliant and they just loved the Civil War and they loved to do presentations on Gettysburg. grew up in a southern family, and I remember I inadvertently got a laugh one time after one of our colonels did a presentation with all kinds of charts and a big pointer where he's pointing at all the movements of the troops and Pickett's charge and this and that. Finally he ended up saying, "So that's how the Battle of Gettysburg was won." And I was actually trying to pay attention and I remember looking up at him and saying, "I'll be damned. I always thought that battle was lost." And they just loved the Civil War because it was so endlessly fascinating to them.

There were several trips, there was one to I think South America and one to Africa and one to Europe and one to Asia. I went on the Asia trip.

Q: Asia's terra incognito to you?

POPE: To me it was. And that's the first time I ever went out there and it was fascinating.

Q: Did you get any feel for, well, did you go to Korea for example?

POPE: We did. We went up to the DMZ. We started in Seoul meeting with Embassy as well as with military, our military and their senior-level generals to talk about where things were at the time. But then we went up to the DMZ. Standing up there in these outposts with these big binoculars and looking into North Korea, and they had these huge towers with huge loudspeakers blasting music at our side and our side was blasting music at their side and gigantic flags waving. It was just surreal; it was like out of a very strange movie. And then we went down in the tunnels because the South Koreans were always listening and trying to find the tunnels. And every now and then they would figure out where one was and they'd sink a little shaft and when they hit into the tunnel they'd then open it up and go down and go way back in and blow it all up and fill it in with concrete until the next time. But I remember walking in one of those, well back into one, and being just astonished at the engineering. It was a beautiful tunnel and it sloped gradually back toward the North, toward North Korea, it was sloped a little so all water would drain back and it had a little rail track down the middle of it so they could push cars down the middle and they could walk several soldiers abreast. They could hear these sort of whumps of explosives going off underground but they couldn't tell where they were. And it was frightening and impressive.

Q: Well, where did you go after the War College?

POPE: The other thing I would mention is we went to China. And I'd never been to China either.

Q: Oh boy.

POPE: And to see China and to be in the hands, so to speak, of the Chinese, of the Peoples Liberation Army and get taken around was really quite fascinating.

Q: How were we portraying China at that time? I mean, sort of from the military point of view?

POPE: As I recall there was still a bit of a glow because Korea was long behind us and I don't remember any particular problems with Taiwan at that point. There might have been, I can't recall them. But the Soviet Union had not collapsed and China was seen as a counterweight, so there was still a bit of a glow with them. As long as they were a counterweight to the Soviets, that was the principal thing.

Q: Well then, so after that whither?

POPE: I stayed in Washington. I went to Legislative Affairs for two years.

Q: This is H?

POPE: H.

Q: What were you doing?

POPE: Africa. And I hadn't bid on it. I was going to the Hill, I was going to go on a Pearson, one of those exchanges to the Hill. Chet's successor was an ambassador named Hank Cohen, somebody I have very high regard for, and Hank asked me to do this, to take the AF job in H, in Legislative Affairs, which I did for two years.

Q: This was a time a lot of things were happening in Africa. I mean, this is when things began to move. In the first place, how would you describe our H bureau and dealing with the Hill? Because I've heard a lot of people who would say well you know, the State Department really doesn't know how to deal with Congress and they're not as responsive. I wonder sometimes whether that's just reflex talking or whether there's something behind it or not. How did you feel?

POPE: Well, that was my one and only time ever doing a job like that so I'm no deep expert on it. I remember the Africa Bureau was lucky because they had a lady who was very, very skilled who had been the in-house AF person who had worked on legislative affairs in their office of regional affairs, AF/RA. And she was very, very knowledgeable and she and I worked closely together. And I tried from the H institutional side and she was working, we worked together. My impression was that the State Department has never been very skillful in working the Hill. We weren't well received; there was a lot of skepticism. Depends on who was in office. I remember going up there even before this time, I'm reverting back a little bit, I can remember going up with Crocker on a number of occasions when I was his Special Assistant and there were a lot of folks up there on the Democratic side, because he was a Reagan appointee, who were extremely skeptical before we walked in the door and barely wanted to hear anything we had to say and didn't believe anything we had to say. And Crocker is not only super-intelligent but he was a very straight, very honorable man and was not lying to them or anything like that. And I don't remember that by the time I got to H it had improved that much. It was '89-'91.

Q: Well, I think there was sort of a feeling that the Reagan administration really was happy with the apartheid regime of South Africa and this whole constructive engagement and all that was simply a smoke screen in order to keep business as usual.

POPE: Right. There was that feeling. And that was certainly not, I was on the inside there, and Crocker was determined to make all of these things happen, including majority rule in South Africa. That was the big prize, just sort of like it's one thing to have the Berlin Wall fall and Germany reunified but the fall of the Soviet Union itself. One thing the Warsaw Pact and the other is the Soviet Union. It's one thing to have the Cubans eventually sail away, but for apartheid to fall was a big deal. Our relations have never been very good on the Hill and I'm sure you experienced that in your career as well. It was difficult. I just remember that as being a very difficult two years. I wasn't very expert in it, and I just found the whole Hill environment frustrating.

Q: Well how about dealing with the Black Caucus and the staff of the Black Caucus? I would think they would take considerable interest in Africa.

POPE: They did.

Q: And not look particularly favorably on the administration.

POPE: They didn't. And at that point it was Bush but it was seen as being not too different, Bush, Reagan, and there was a lot of suspicion and initial readiness to believe negative things.

Q: Were there any particular people in the Black Caucus that you recall, I mean that were particularly active in the African side of things?

POPE: Not so well, not on the Hill side. There was one person who in particular was very outspoken but he was not in Congress. Randall Robinson was a gentleman who was heading up an organization that suddenly the name of which just escapes me, but he was very active on African affairs. But there were lots of people in Congress, both Black Caucus and otherwise, who were very interested in Africa and particularly in the whole Southern Africa piece of it. But it felt like there was suspicion in the Black Caucus about anybody, even career people like me, who had no political ax to grind.

Q: Were there any instruments that you could use to try to dilute this suspicion or not?

POPE: Information. I think that being a career civil servant, and they understood that I wasn't a political person; I think I had a fair amount of individual credibility with people. And I didn't meet with members so often, sometimes. But I'd meet with staff a lot and I developed, I think, pretty adequate relations with both Democratic and Republican staffers of the various committees. And I think they came to see me as really as straightforward; I wasn't going to BS any of them. And didn't. Plus, some progress was being made on some of the issues. Mandela was not quite out of prison yet, but he was on his way.

Q: Had the Cubans left by this time?

POPE: I think so. I can't quite remember when they left but yes, I believe so, it was around then.

Q: Well then you did this for?

POPE: Two years.

Q: Two years.

POPE: Yes.

Q: I take it this wasn't your happiest assignment.

POPE: It wasn't. It just wasn't my thing. But it was interesting in its own way. I'm glad, in retrospect, to know something about the Hill and to have done it, but it just wasn't the kind of thing that I would have wanted to do my whole life, in retrospect, be a lobbyist, work the Hill.

Q: Well, did you carry with you in later times at least the feeling of, you know, if we're doing this or this policy, you know, kind of wondering what kind of support we'll get from Congress?

POPE: Oh yes, sure. And we've never understood Congress properly and they've never understood us properly. And we've never devoted the resources that we need to do, to Congress or public diplomacy. And my understanding is that the current group up there, Dr. Rice and others, I'm told, are really pushing ambassadors to do much more public diplomacy and pushing people to do much more interaction on the Hill. And certainly during the time, my most recent, I'm getting ahead of myself now a little bit but my final assignment in counterterrorism, when Colin Powell was the Secretary and Rich Armitage was the Deputy, they had really had a different view of relations with the Hill than some before. Some groups before had insisted that any contact with the Hill be run through H and be very limited and narrowly targeted, etc. And Powell and Armitage pressed people to have contacts, sort of freed them. Report back and keep the regional bureau and H posted on what you're doing but get up there, get to know people, talk to people, get the story out. They just had a different philosophy, it wasn't so restricted, it was open. And in fact, the hand in the small of the back, get up there, get up there and meet people, talk to people. And if you can't meet a Member then meet a staffer. But still, overall, the State Department has never had a very good rep on the Hill and I think there's pretty good reason.

Q: Well then in- are we talking about '91 now?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Where did you go?

POPE: I went to South Africa from there and it was absolutely fascinating.

Q: Okay. So we'll pick this up in '91 going to South Africa.

POPE: Yes.

Q: Great.

Okay, today is the 9th of June, 2006. Bill, off to South Africa. You were there from '91 to when?

POPE: To '93.

Q: '93. Okay, what was your job?

POPE: I was the Deputy Political Counselor in Pretoria.

Q: Talk a bit about the situation when you arrived in '91 in South Africa.

POPE: Well, it was really not in turmoil but it was in evolution because Mandela was out of prison and people were starting to come back from exile or were coming out of prisons. They were organizing themselves down in Johannesburg; the ANC had set up in an office building called Shell House. And the government was dancing around, trying to figure out how to organize itself as well. And they were being pushed by the clergy, both sides being pushed by the clergy, to find some way to engage and it was just fascinating to get to know the personalities and observe it. We were the stay-behind group. You remember that was the period and they may still do it, when the government went back and forth from Pretoria to Cape Town. There's a history behind that, and a couple of my colleagues went on down to Cape Town with Parliament. And the thing is the White parliament had really become more or less irrelevant at that point because everybody knew what was in the cards and the real action was in Pretoria and Johannesburg and the area in between, the Midrand area, where there was a big convention center where these negotiations eventually were going to take place.

Q: Why weren't they taking place in Cape Town? I would think Cape Town would be more neutral territory than, say, Pretoria.

POPE: Well they weren't in Pretoria. The negotiations actually took place between Pretoria and Johannesburg, and that was considered by them to be meeting each other halfway, an area called Midrand, midway between the two. And there was a convention center there and they organized this big negotiation called CODESA, Congress for Democracy and Equality in South Africa I think is what CODESA stood for.

Q: Well, who was your leader in Pretoria when the ambassador wasn't there?

POPE: The DCM was Marshall McCallie, a great guy, really great.

Q: And who was ambassador?

POPE: Well when I first came it was Bill Swing and then later Princeton Lyman.

Q: Well now, in Pretoria, Pretoria was still, correct me if I'm wrong but this is the heart of the Afrikaners, wasn't it?

POPE: That's right. Or the edge of the heart. The heart was a little farther east and south.

Q: Okay. Now, you arrived there in '91 and go out and make your calls and all. What were you getting? I mean, we're talking about a specific time. I mean, these clouds were, to them, were looming over the horizon. What were you getting from the normal contacts you had?

POPE: Well, it depends on what kind of contacts you're talking about. There was a certain level at which the government, the apartheid government, was still trying to keep business going. For example, when I would go to the Foreign Ministry and talk to the diplomats there, in many ways it was very much like going to talk to any others. They were still trying to keep things, they knew it was coming, too, but they were still trying to keep things on track. They were bringing in minority junior officers already and interns and smart young Africans. But it depended on where I was. If you talked to politicians, that was all it was about, politicians or business people, the whole rest of society, that was the issue - the negotiations and the future and how would it come out and how much power different people would be able to maintain.

Q: Were you finding, did we have much contact, I assume there was a diehard, never, never, never type.

POPE: There was.

Q: Were these people you could talk to or did we find ourselves just bypassing them?

POPE: We tried to talk to them and we had some Afrikaans trained speakers in the Political Section who did speak to them, to the extent we could. And we would observe at large congresses and meetings just as we tried to do with the ANC. And so, yes, but we knew that they weren't the ultimate long-range future. If you think of a magnet, trying to pull iron filings in different directions, they were trying to pull the solution as far in their direction as possible. But I can't imagine many except the most extreme ones didn't understand where this was going.

Q: Was there any talk of an underground movement, an armed resistance?

POPE: Some talk of it but I don't remember that it was anything that was too serious or that people worried about. I think there was some talk at one point about trying to split off and create some kind of a separate little country somewhere above Bloemfontein. But I don't think any of that was very serious. South Africa was going to remain a united country under somebody, and it was pretty clear to most people it would be under Nelson Mandela, but it was just what the deal was going to be.

Q: Well how, when you got there from one, your perspective and then two, from the perspective of say the Whites you were dealing with, what was the view of Mandela at that time?

POPE: It was mixed. But there were already a lot of people who understood that this was a very unusual individual, a very special and unusual individual, not your run-of-the-mill politician, Black or White, and that he was a huge moral force to be reckoned with. A lot of people were already thinking, "Do I try to get my assets and move to Australia or Canada or the United States?" People who lived in the wealthier areas. And some ended up doing it, didn't take much with them, others didn't.

Q: What about, I realize Johannesburg is the, sort of the industrial center, but when you were there, what was the business community talking about? Was this going to make it change?

POPE: Sure, absolutely. Because they'd been in a privileged position up to now. I don't think they were all necessarily diehard apartheid supporters, but I think they just wanted the most favorable deal, the most economic and political clout of the business class to come out of the deal. And even though the political situation was going to be turned on its head, everybody understood that they didn't want the business side to be turned on its head. They wanted business to continue and for there not to be large expropriations of land and things to go on.

Q: Well did you find, were the White community much resentment at the United States, saying you got us into this or something like that?

POPE: Some, but I didn't detect so much of that. Yes, there was some because we were pushing them, as were others, but we obviously were the big dog in the fight. And there was some of that and of course there was also still this residual fear that what it was really all about was still being run out of Moscow even though the Soviet Union had come apart. So it was still seen by some as an international communist plot to bring in Mandela and make it the Soviet Union of the south.

Q: Well up in Pretoria was there much of a Black presence? I'm talking about a significant, you know, either economic or political presence.

POPE: No. It was mostly servants, still pretty much a White city. That was Johannesburg.

Q: Were you all getting together with the people from consulate general and elements of our embassy in Johannesburg and also in Cape Town? I mean were everybody sort of seeing the same picture or were there, I won't say disputes but different perspectives on what was happening?

POPE: I don't remember different perspectives inside the house. There might have been, but they couldn't have been too serious because I think I would be able to recall them. I think everybody saw it pretty much the same way.

Q: Well what was the conventional embassy, country, American representatives in South Africa, conventional wisdom as to how this thing was going to come out?

POPE: More or less like it did. I'm not saying that we'd been perfect in predicting everything. You remember we talked about Yugoslavia. And I had my doubts as to whether Yugoslavia could hold together as one country but I never expected the violence. I thought it might stay together but even if it didn't there wouldn't be the violence. So we've missed the call on many occasions. In this one I think we got it pretty right, that it would be an ANC-led government and that they would be much more moderate and much more business-friendly and more human rights-friendly than some people feared.

Q: Well was there a concern about the breakdown of public order? In other words the servants would arise and rape and steal and all that?

POPE: There was some, sure. It was fanned by the extreme right that one day all the servants would rise up and kill everybody. I don't remember that anybody ever took that very seriously because I just remember being struck by how remarkably gentle and decent and forgiving people were. And not just Mandela, I mean down at the much lower levels, no matter what. I can remember talking to somebody and now I'm straining to think who it was, it was a man, an African; I don't think he was a servant but he wasn't very high either. And he was talking about things that had been done and some relative, a brother or somebody who had been rounded up and beaten up by the police because he was Black and I guess died. But my recollection of this man is that he was not bitter. "That was terrible and I've taken a deep breath and now we need to go forward and we must forgive and go forward as a nation and all be together, Black and White, etc." It was remarkable, in my view. Obviously not everybody felt that way. You had young firebrands on the left who wanted to rise up but the vast majority-

Q: Did you find yourself having to go through some sort of mental readjustment, carrying the baggage of Yugoslavia, which was again a divided place although the complexions were the same but still. You know, you could see how deep these hatreds lay. I mean, did you find that you were trying to equate Yugoslavia to this when you first arrived?

POPE: No, I don't remember that. It felt much more like a unified country that had been and should be unified. Exactly how it should govern itself and make those arrangements was another issue. But Yugoslavia was a very artificial kind of an entity with very distinct peoples who had a long, long history, hundreds of years older than South Africa. South Africa felt more like a United States or an Australia, a "young country carved out of the wilderness" kind of feel but one that should be one country. Most people, except those White extremists who were talking about some kind of a republic of something, I forget what they called it, bordering Botswana and Namibia.

Q: The Orange Republic or something?

POPE: Something, I can't remember, some name for it. But other than that I just don't remember much talk like that.

Q: Did you get much of a chance to get out to the sort of the heart of the White establishment out on the farms.

POPE: Not enough. That was not my principal tasking and I didn't speak Afrikaans. So I did do it some and it was amazing, it was another world. It was really another world. My wife and I were just discussing the other day about New Year's Eve of 1992, '91-'92, when we were invited to an Afrikaner wedding, deep, deep in Afrikanerdom, somewhere south of Pretoria and Johannesburg but really, really out in the bush. And almost nobody there spoke English and there was no alcohol. It was all Dutch Reform, and it was another world. And then we found out halfway through the wedding reception that way back behind some staircase there was a little place with some watered-down champagne that we would be allowed to go take if we could find it. But it was really another world out there and it was very, very isolated.

Q: What happened in Pretoria when the government moved down to Cape Town? I mean, from your perspective.

POPE: Not so much change because most of the permanent government stayed in Pretoria. It was really the politicians, primarily the parliament. Even they, in particular the ministers, were going back and forth flying, an easy flight, flying back and forth all the time. And so, for the permanent government, foreign ministry and other parts of the government, that we interacted with it wasn't such a big shock. As well as our principal focus, as I said, was these negotiations that were going on right there between Johannesburg and Pretoria, halfway at the place called Midrand. That was our focus. And we'd read the reports from our colleagues down in Cape Town and watch the news. "Parliament debated something today." It seemed like it was deck chairs on the Titanic.

Q: I would have thought, I mean, the parliament just wasn't engaging? Was this because they were shutting their eyes to developments or was it just that they'd been bypassed and that?

POPE: I don't know their reasoning. Probably both of what you just said. But the bottom line is that they were debating various kinds of bills and things that just didn't matter, as far as I was concerned. I don't want to speak for my colleagues who were down in Cape Town and responsible for covering the Parliament, because they did a good job and they went and they did what they were supposed to do, as well as covering the politics of what was going on down around that area and how the Blacks and the Coloreds and others were feeling about the events taking place to the north of them. But our very heavy focus was to some degree interacting with the government like anyone would here, a diplomat here with our government and to a considerable degree these negotiations. The negotiations were what dominated my time there.

Q: Well was there, in Pretoria, the equivalent to, was it Soweto or something? An area set aside for the Blacks which turned into almost a viable political area?

POPE: Nothing significant that I recall. It was really Soweto and similar townships and they were really grouped around Johannesburg. And people came up by combi, by vans and trains.

Q: Well what developed while you were there in the political process? You were there from '91 to '93?

POPE: Yes. I left before it all came to fruition and before the 1994 elections when Mandela became President. But it went a long way. They agreed, they formed their own internal teams and their own internal positions and began to have initial contacts with each other, the key players, Mbeki and Cyril Ramaphosa and those people on the one side and Roelf Meyer and the others on the other side and began to reach out to each other and have small meetings and then larger meetings and then finally they settled on the spot. By then it was like a huge political convention. It was really big and there were a lot of people and of course the press was all over it and people swarming every time some important delegate would come out of a negotiating room, people swarming with microphones. We were swarming in our own way, trying to peel them off to ask them, because Washington was really interested, Washington wanted to know everything.

So what happened was organizing internally, both the government and the opposition, and then coming together and figuring out how to begin the negotiations. And then actually starting the negotiations.

Q: Were we playing any role at this time in preparing South African Blacks, you're talking about interns and all this? You know, trips to the States sort of to prep young up-and-coming men and women from the Black community to take over? Not power, I mean take over responsibilities.

POPE: We had a large USAID mission. In fact, when we moved into our new secure embassy, as large as it was because we had been in downtown office buildings, as large as the new embassy was, the USAID mission was still outside because it was so large. To my recollection, it did anything any aid mission would have, kind of more structural things like digging wells and those kinds of things. But also it had lots of exchange programs and training young Blacks and all of that, the kinds of things you're talking about.

Q: What happened to your, well embassy, when the ambassador showed up? I mean, did it change or did your job change?

POPE: I can't remember any extended time when we didn't have one. We had Bill Swing when I came.

Q: I was thinking when the ambassador came to Cape Town, or were they back and forth all the time?

POPE: When the Parliament was in Cape Town, the Ambassador was down there more and the DCM was Acting up in Pretoria. I just don't remember that it changed things that much. It was an easy flight, he came back and forth and we were heavily focused on our business. So no, I don't remember that that had a huge effect. Both of them were great ambassadors and extremely popular with the troops, both Bill Swing and Princeton Lyman. Those are both people you should have, if you haven't-

Q: I've talked to Princeton but-

POPE: Bill Swing you absolutely should get. Boy, he's a smart-

Q: I don't know where he is now. Is he still in New York?

POPE: He was out doing, I think Liberia peacekeeping. Where he is right now I'm not sure.

Q: What about other embassies, particularly, you know, an awful lot of European countries particularly had a stake in this. I mean, the British of course but the Scandinavians and the Germans, you know, the community, certainly the Western community was heavily engaged in this.

POPE: They were.

Q: I was just wondering what were your relations, what were you seeing there?

POPE: Well of course the Scandinavians were always heavily involved in assistance. When I met my wife, who was at the Swedish legation, they didn't have an embassy; they had a legation because they didn't quite recognize apartheid. They wanted to be on the ground but they didn't want to have a full blown embassy. She was doing aid work for their SIDA, their equivalent of USAID. Others had a more mixed role like ours, the Brits and the French, the big ones. Everybody was represented, the Dutch of course had a kind of a special long-term relationship, the Germans, everybody was present. Their governments were very interested and they had their own reporting sections reporting whatever they could pick up on political developments. And of course they had their aid missions as well.

Q: Well, you're all working the same side of the street, was there a lot of collegiality at this point?

POPE: There was with me and as far as I can recall, with other officers, too. I used to meet the Brits and the French and the Dutch and others to compare notes: "What are you hearing? What are you seeing?" Sure. And not only about that but other things that were going on around, too. For example, I had a French colleague down there with whom I served later in another post and he and I used to talk, not only about what's happening inside, and we probably had the best view of that of almost anybody, probably anybody, what was happening in the negotiations but also the region. They had, for example, relations with the Marxist government in Luanda, in Angola. And of course we were rather heavily invested with Savimbi at that point. And they knew a lot of things, the French Embassy in Pretoria knew a lot of things and so we compared notes.

Q: Well then, this is where you met your wife? Was there any problem in marrying, two Foreign Service officers of different services, different countries, getting married?

POPE: I was a bachelor at that point, I never expected to meet anybody, much less anybody who wasn't an American. And SY was remarkably reasonable about it. I had to fill out some forms, but they were remarkably reasonable. I guess if she'd been from Russia or North Korea or something, they might have been a little more concerned. Sweden somehow just didn't strike anybody as a threat, I guess, of any kind.

Q: What was your wife's background?

POPE: She was a Foreign Service officer. She wasn't a career SIDA person, a USAID-equivalent career officer, she was a Foreign Ministry officer who was detailed to work with the SIDA people.

Q: Had she served in other countries?

POPE: Oh, lots. She, honestly, if you were ever doing these on other people she'd be somebody who'd be really interesting to talk to. She had her first tour in Beirut and it was a tough time. It was a tough time out there because of the civil war going. And so she'd had a lot of experiences herself and had served in Zimbabwe right after independence and in Prague. So that was tough because the Czechs obviously didn't care whether you were an American or a Swede or what; if you were a Westerner you were followed and tapped and listened to and just a lot of pressure all the time that she didn't particularly care for. So we had both together had a lot of interesting experiences.

Q: Well then, is there anything else that we should cover do you think?

POPE: On South Africa?

Q: On South Africa.

POPE: I would just say I had the privilege on several occasions of meeting Nelson Mandela and he is, to this day, the most remarkable individual I ever met. I recognize everybody's human and everybody has faults, but there was something, being in his presence. I obviously never met Gandhi, but a kind of something, a kind of an aura around Mandela, at least that's what I felt, that must have been like being around Gandhi. I marvel that Mandela could be so absent of bitterness, given that he'd been sent away and broken rocks for all those years. And I think they were unbelievably blessed, just like we were with our founding fathers. We got an exceptional group of people in the mid-18th century. And I think it could have gone very differently, if South Africa hadn't had this really remarkable individual. So I just can't say enough about Mandela.

Q: Well, when you left in '90-

POPE: Three.

Q: Three, were you feeling optimistic, I mean, was that sort of the feeling, that things were heading in the right direction?

POPE: I was, I was very optimistic about South Africa. I don't recall that we understood what a toll HIV/AIDS was going to take yet. It was there, but I don't think we understood the toll it was going to take all the way across Africa but particularly in Central and Southern. And the other thing that already was worrying everybody and was already quite serious was crime. Even if the rest of the political transition went well, went really well, and even if there were an election and Mandela became president and he brought in lots of officials of all kinds of creeds and races and had the best possible administration, there was at a minimum that cloud on the horizon. Crime was so pervasive it was driving people out of Johannesburg. People were living in armed compounds already, and I'm just not sure in retrospect that I understood how bad it was going to get.

For example, there were a lot of carjackings. I had a little red sports car, and I'm really amazed in retrospect that I wasn't carjacked. There were a lot of carjackings but they used to run up to you and stick a gun through the window and tell you to get out. And if you got out and gave them the keys and didn't resist, they'd drive away. And later it came to the point where, even if you didn't resist, they'd kill you and then drive away. You see the difference in the ferocity of it. And so that's something about South Africa that my wife and I both found heartbreaking.

Q: What was the analysis or common wisdom of why this was? Was it the breakdown in the police force which had been this, you know, apartheid but very tough force, was that it or was it just the times were changing or what?

POPE: A combination of things. I don't remember exactly how, whether we did a formal analysis of it, we probably did. But it was what you just said about the police but it also was the whole sociology and the change and lots and lots and lots of young men with virtually no education. You remember that whole Soweto generation, the boycotts that started in '76. They called them the lost generation, the whole lost generation of young men, just feeding on each other and more and more violent. So a combination of factors and extreme poverty. By African standards, South Africa was so advanced. I've forgotten, we had the statistics, but it generated something like 60 percent of all of the electric power on the continent, it had 80 percent of the telephones. Those kinds of infrastructure percentages. But still there were pockets of deep Third World kind of poverty with no electricity, no running water, no chance for any kind of advancement. So it was a combination of things. That worried me when I left, and it's just gotten much more tragic.

Q: With your embassy, how much, when you arrived in '91, had we recruited Black Foreign Service nationals? I mean, did we have-

POPE: Oh yes. We did, sure. We had a mix. I don't remember what the percentage was but definitely had Black FSNs and White FSNs. And Colored FSNs.

Q: Yes. Did this seem to work fairly well?

POPE: In my recollection, it was quite harmonious. Everybody got along fine. We were a microcosm of how it should work. If you talk to some of my colleagues, they might have some other recollection, but I don't think so.

Q: Well then, we move to '94. Where did you go?

POPE: Well in '93 I came back and I was an office director in PM, the Political Military Bureau, working for an old colleague I had known before named Bob Gallucci.

Q: Well now, you were doing that from '93 to?

POPE: '95.

Q: '95. What was the Political Military Bureau like in those days? I mean, what were its interests?

POPE: Well it had a number of fixed interests, of course, which are things like liaising with allies on exercises and being the link-in on military issues. Obviously NATO is in the European Bureau, but Political Military Affairs had all the standard issues that they had always had, but there were some other interesting issues that had come out of the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of Eastern Europe. My initial task was to combine two offices into one. One had been doing the old Co-Com, the old controls on trying to prevent the communists from getting technology and that obviously was OBE, with a couple of exceptions. And so that had to be melded somehow with another office and I've forgotten what either of the predecessor offices was named exactly, but it became called the Office of Export Control Policy. We were the sister office to the Defense Trade Controls Office, which was over in Rosslyn that actually did the defense export licensing. They did the licensing; we were the policy, export control policy. And it was very interesting because we were redoing our policies at the time, as these countries became fully independent and democratic, Poland, Czechoslovakia and then the Czech Republic, Hungary and the others. And of course, the old policies wouldn't apply anymore, so we had to redo those.

The other thing that was really interesting that we were working on was one piece of the Nunn-Lugar legislation. And you know about the Nunn-Lugar legislation probably. Nunn-Lugar was to find ways to keep nuclear materials from leaching out of what had been the Soviet Union, Russia and the former Soviet states, and getting into the hands of terrorists or terror-sponsoring states, to try to help them build facilities instead of keeping nuclear materials in a shed with a padlock on the door. Build real containment facilities with underground, concrete buildings and then wire and then more wire and then more guards, too. There were various baskets of the Nunn-Lugar, and one was to help keep scientists employed, scientists who had been doing nuclear research whose bureaus had gone out of business; to help them instead of being hired away by Qadhafi or Saddam Hussein for big bucks, which would have happened, to help them stay employed in Russia or wherever they were living and not go somewhere else. And my office had a small piece of it; it was the smallest of the basket, but to help these newly independent countries create export control regimes of their own. And it was very interesting to do this.

I remember one trip when I went out to the region and I was talking with a minister and we were literally looking at maps like you have here on your office. This minister said well, we really don't have external borders. We just have one external border and it's just this little border down in here and we have two border posts down there but the rest of it is open. And we were talking and I said, "But you're an independent country now. Your border is not this; your border is all of this all the way around here. And one of the key elements of sovereignty is controlling your own border and you just have got to exercise that and not only controlling people and not only controlling what kinds of goods come in but you also need to be able to control what goes out of your country." And I remember it just seemed like a real wake up call.

Q: Well of course it was very early in-

POPE: It was very early.

Q: Didn't you sense when you got to the PM Bureau that, I mean the Bureau as a whole, kind of, which had been very much, I mean, the center of it, of course, was NATO, and it was kind of looking for a new role? You know, with the Soviet Union dissolving and all, I mean, there obviously were major problems and you had a hunk of that action about technical matters getting into the wrong hands but I would have thought that at that time they would have said, "Okay, what do we do now? We don't have the Soviets to worry about."

POPE: Yes but NATO still existed and there was plenty of work to do. It was consolidation and what next? But I just remember the Bureau was just flat out all the time with issues. And then of course later you had expansion of NATO but that was already being whispered even back then.

Q: What about your old stamping grounds of Yugoslavia? Was that, you didn't get roped into that?

POPE: No. I really didn't. I really don't remember having anything to do with that. Yugoslavia was still a little off the edge at that point.

Q: Well with these export controls, where were you all seeing your problem, particular problem?

POPE: Well, there were the bad states, and it was a constant battle to keep the Europeans focused on remaining solid. And there was Iraq in particular and Rolf Ekéus was heading this committee up in New York and I used to go up and sit with that sometimes to try to keep the spine, keep the backbone of the Europeans. I know the commercial deal is out there but we really must stay the course.

Q: I mean, you know, it had been sort of conventional wisdom, again, of saying the French, the Germans and the Russians were very interested in commercial deals with Iraq and despite the fact that Saddam Hussein, we'd already fought him once, was considered a menace, I mean, did these countries show up in your concerns?

POPE: One of the things we were trying not to duplicate to the extent we could, assistance on the positive side, assistance to the various states in the former Soviet Union but also on the other side as part of the Iraq containment effort, for example, our little piece of it. Of course we would try when we could, to make our points known, that these sanctions had to stay tight and had to stay firm and that we were going to make a lot of noise if we found out about exports to those countries, for example, things that went beyond a limited amount that was approved.

Q: Well, did you find yourself or were we concerned about leakage so almost officially condoned by some of these countries that were dealing, say with Iraq or Qadhafi?

POPE: Yes. Definitely.

Q: What ones were they?

POPE: Ones you just mentioned.

Q: What did we do? Say we know what you're doing?

POPE: Yes, yes, we'd have conversations, without going too far into it, we would have conversations.

Q: Now, this is still a very tricky subject. I'm sure the true story is out there, a lot of people are waiting for that shoe to fall once the documents are released about the-

POPE: That will be very interesting when those documents come out.

Q: About the dealings of, you know, I'm a sort of a Francophile but at the same time I feel that, you know, if there's something, if there's money to be made one sells one's grandmother, possibly wife, in order to- I mean, the French are- put commercial interests quite high.

POPE: Very. Very.

Q: And the Russians, of course, were looking for anything they could do. I mean, they were looking for a role in the world at that time. And the Germans, I mean, they've had this, you know, the Berlin, the Baghdad Railroad going back to pre World War I.

POPE: Right.

Q: And Iraq had these peculiar ties. Well, were we concerned about India, Pakistan on particularly nuclear matters?

POPE: Sure. My office wasn't particularly working that. But we were. We actually worked in every region. I remember my office, for example had a big discussion that was a precedent-setter so we had to spend a lot of time in South America, South America because-

Q: Was this the introduction of jets?

POPE: Yes, exactly. This was the introduction of jets.

Q: The whole idea was to dampen down so they didn't get into an arms race-

POPE: Exactly.

Q: -between the two. It was counterproductive for everyone.

POPE: Exactly. But the reason I raise that is just to give you an idea of the breadth that we were working because of course you think automatically of the former Soviet Union and Europe and maybe Iraq, but in fact that was a real issue when I was there, about the jets and South America and do we actually permit it. And of course there are real economic rationales on the other side for doing it, but we were really concerned about this arms race that you're talking about. If one got them, the other absolutely would do it.

Q: Well in the first place, weren't the Brazilians producing quite a good plane?

POPE: I don't know how good it was, but they were producing- I don't know how it stacked up against others; I don't think it was as good as ours but it was okay.

Q: And the Israelis were messing around in that too, weren't they, or not?

POPE: Maybe. I don't recall the Israelis but I wouldn't be surprised. I just don't know.

Q: I recall somebody saying that, you know, Ecuador and Peru every once in awhile go through this exercise over this cocoa jungle and I think the Israelis were supplying the Ecuadorians with jet planes. This is somewhat later. And the Peruvians had, you know, good old standby MiGs or something. What happened during your time? Did market forces sort of take over?

POPE: No. My recollection is that, while I was there, we held the line on it against them. And to be honest with you I don't know how it came out later, once I went on to other things.

Q: How about did you get involved in China, Taiwan and all that?

POPE: I don't recall so much. That wasn't really changing. We were writing new policy vis-à-vis the states of the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, and that was really the thing that took our time as well as some of these Nunn-Lugar export control regime duties. And what you're talking about, China-Taiwan, are really important issues, but I don't remember that there was a lot of new ground broken on those while I was there. We were breaking a lot of new ground.

Q: How were we seeing Iraq at the time? Do you know? I mean, Saddam had gotten a bloody nose from his going into Kuwait but were we seeing them as trying to get back into the military game by weapons of mass destruction and all this?

POPE: Sure. Sure. That's what all these different regimes and the committee up in New York that Rolf Ekehus was heading. That's what this was all about, was denying them-

Q: Was he talking as much about fancier planes or tanks. I mean, it was more the esoteric weapons.

POPE: Yes, that's right. And to the extent that we could, to try to understand the different channels through which one little piece would be acquired and then one other little piece would be acquired, all in separate little channels and then put together into something else and to find ways to insist that everybody do this, have in place the mechanism and actually enforce it. Because you get a lot of the same kinds of arguments that the Iranians are making right now. The Iranians are saying, well our program's only for peaceful nuclear power and they're floating on one of the biggest seas of oil in the world along with the Saudis. They've got enough to light the world for a long, long time. It's very transparent. But the Iraqis were saying oh we must have these separators for fertilizers, to make fertilizers and we weren't even aware that you thought they could be used for some other purpose. Heaven forefend, wouldn't think of it. And we were always trying to identify these dual use items and try to keep them out of their hands as much as we could.

Q: Why were you, I mean obviously a bunch of Foreign Service and military officers sitting in PM aren't going to know which tubing does what and all that.

POPE: No.

Q: Where were you getting your- I mean, there must have been quite a technical input of-

POPE: There was.

Q: Watch out for this stuff or something like that.

POPE: There was. From various parts of the government and other governments. And it would come together, for example, when we would meet with this committee in New York. Governments would bring delegations and they wouldn't be all Foreign Service people. They would have a lot of technical people who would sit down and talk about things I barely understood. Pieces of equipment, for example, did you know that this piece can go such and such and such? And the other guy would say not only that but it will do this and that. And the Foreign Service people looking at each other with almost no clue what they were talking about. But we knew we didn't want Saddam to have them.

Q: Did you, was there sort of a translator who would say okay, this is what they're talking about, this is what we should do?

POPE: Sometimes. Or the technical people. We had some really good people in State who also were technical and they could speak State and they would turn around and say, in layman's terms here's what we're worried about.

Q: How did we view Qadhafi at the time?

POPE: Still pretty negatively. You'd had Pan Am 103. This was still quite some years ago and I don't remember any particular thought that this guy had changed.

Q: Were there any other, North Korea, I guess, was so far beyond the pale.

POPE: I can't recall that we had particular concern about North Korea. Of course, we were deeply concerned about North Korea but that there would be some sudden big break for money of somebody who had a lot of technology of North Korea might have been but I can't recall it.

Q: Did the Pakistani scientist, I think his last name was Khan but everybody else's last name was Khan, but you know, the head of the Pakistan nuclear program apparently was dealing in a big way, was that apparent at the time?

POPE: I have no recollection of it. So either he wasn't yet or it wasn't on my scope. Only much later the A. Q. Khan business.

Q: How'd you find in this because I'd imagine intelligence would, relations with the CIA. Did this work fairly well?

POPE: Excellent. I remember no problems with them, very cooperative. They had very smart and skilled people.

Q: Were there any other areas we haven't touched that you were particularly concerned about in this PM period?

POPE: No. Bureaucratically I was merging two existing offices so that was a little bit of work or more than a little, that was a fair amount of work, bringing people in from another part of the building and trying to find the space and then melding people and figuring out how to reconfigure it; the bureaucratic stuff. And then the probably single biggest mission was the whole redoing the export control policy toward an entity and a regime that didn't exist anymore and countries that were having democratic elections already like Poland and wanted to be friends and wanted to ultimately be part of NATO. And we knew what direction all that was going and so to scrap all the Cold War stuff and redo it, that was a lot of work.

Q: Did computer power, I mean, the fancier computers, was this part of your concern?

POPE: Yes, it was, now that you mention it and I remember some real battles over exports. And there was a committee that was chaired by Commerce, called the, I can't remember the name of that committee but we sat on it. DOD (Department of Defense) and some others from the government sat on it and there were some real knockdown, drag-outs and it was mostly about computers.

Q: What were the issues?

POPE: Should this university in China be allowed to get this much computing power? Will they really honor these limitations or will others come in and tap in and use them for various purposes that we don't want them used for.

Q: Was the feeling that the computer business is proliferating so much that in many ways no matter what you do you were playing catch up and you were playing catch up at a game you were going to lose or not? I mean, you know, the amount of memory built in to compute was increasing exponentially.

POPE: Oh yes.

Q: You know, every year it doubles or something like that.

POPE: Yes. And everybody knew that. And the numbers were absurdly low for computing power that we would permit to be exported without a license. And others were just leaping past us, even though we were still in the lead in computer technology. But the people who wanted to keep these limitations would make the argument we just can't be seen to be contributing to certain programs.

Q: It was kind of show, I mean for show purposes, you know, to show that you were doing the right thing rather than being effective. Or did you have that feeling?

POPE: I had that feeling sometimes but I'm not sure that all the people who were on the other side or were on that side of the fence. We tended to be the swing vote all the time, which was very uncomfortable because there were some who really wanted to go forward with exports period and others who really didn't want to go forward with any anywhere.

Q: I'm told that the battle often was Commerce wanted to sell, the Pentagon wanted to prohibit.

POPE: That's right.

Q: And State sort of was in between.

POPE: Yes. And it was very awkward. That's exactly how it was. And it was very awkward because we were always on somebody's bad list.

Q: Well then, you left there in-

POPE: Well actually it was in '94 because I then unexpectedly, I still don't know how it happened, I got a call one day to go see Leon Fuerth. And I knew that name but I'd never met him. He was the National Security Advisor to Vice President Gore. And I had no idea why. I went over there and he was sitting there and he had a huge stack of papers on his desk and he had a file. He said it says here you served in Yugoslavia. And I answered, yes, I have. And he said well then you're hired. And I asked but for what? I didn't bid on it. Well you're hired anyway to be the Coordinator, the chairman of this interagency coordinating committee to enforce sanctions on Yugoslavia. The coordinating committee was interagency inside the United States because there were quite a few parts of the U.S. Government involved in enforcing sanctions against Milosevic. So I was surprised that I didn't know it, but I said yes. And it was only a one-year assignment, it was sort of mid-'94 to mid-'95, and it was interesting as could be.

Q: '94, mid-'94 when you took it, what was the situation in the former Yugoslavia?

POPE: Well, it was not good. There were already problems in Bosnia in particular and others declaring independence and there had been shelling, shelling of Dubrovnik and the whole situation. I don't quite remember the timeline of it but it was coming apart in ways that I didn't imagine would happen.

Q: Were Serbia and Croatia were kind of at war?

POPE: They were. They were at war, but also you had huge problems over Bosnia and it was a very unfortunate situation. It was very heartbreaking for me because I liked Yugoslavia and the people out there. But it was felt that the sanctions needed to be squeezed down to the maximum possible to try to avoid further bloodshed. And there was an international effort that was headquartered out of Brussels to enforce international sanctions around Serbia to prevent oil getting in, oil and fuel products getting in, and exports going out. And blocking the exports going out was fairly easy because they had bulk exports like grain and they basically just pulled blockages across the railroad tracks and sent a gunboat up the Danube and that did it. Because in the early days I was told a story, and this was before I got on this but by somebody who'd been doing these sanctions earlier, that at the very beginning of it had one of the sanctions monitors standing on the shore. It sounds apocryphal, I don't know, but it makes a good story. Standing on the shore of the Danube at the border coming out of Serbia, out of Yugoslavia, and the sanctions monitor sees this barge coming down loaded with grain and is yelling stop, it's prohibited, you can't, can you hear me? Stop. And it just keeps going and goes right on up. And this was bringing money into Milosevic's coffers, of course. And so then they sent a gunboat up, the Italians sent a boat with a gun and that stopped it and they blocked off the railroads. But of course oil products were still coming in and especially from Albania across Montenegro, Lake Shkoder there.

And what we had was an interagency committee working with Customs and Defense and CIA and I've forgotten who all exactly but all the agencies on that committee were to coordinate our piece of helping the larger international coordinating group. And it was really interesting. And we were basically to squeeze Milosevic to the point where he agreed to go to Dayton and then of course it was up to Holbrooke whatever deal was negotiated there. And we did.

Q: During this time that you were doing this coordinating between '94 and '95, what were the issues that you were particularly dealing with? Because you were doing the internal and were these people within the United States or?

POPE: Both. Even though I was physically sitting in the State Department, we were reporting to the foreign policy advisor of the Vice President who was in charge of this government effort, Leon Fuerth. And there apparently was a story about how that happened, too, and it was long before my time, and I don't know exactly, it was an odd arrangement but that was the arrangement. And we had enough agencies inside the house, basically, involved in this that we needed some kind of a little coordinating cell, a coordinating nucleus. That was our group.

Q: You're talking about Commerce, Treasury, Pentagon. I mean, all the usual.

POPE: Yes, that's right. And Customs. And so there were enough. We probably had a dozen agencies involved and we were the coordinating nucleus physically sitting in State but reporting to the White House. At the same time, we were the principal link with the organization in Brussels that was under the EU. And there was a retired Italian ambassador who was the head of this large organization. We met a couple of times a year in Plenary in Brussels, the various countries involved in the sanctions effort, trying to close it off and squeeze it down.

Q: Well now this had no connection, I take it, to the cutting off of arms to Bosnia and to all?

POPE: No.

Q: Because that was a whole different thing.

POPE: Yes.

Q: This was strictly on Serbia.

POPE: Yes. This was economic sanctions on Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs.

Q: How did you distinguish between the Bosnian Serbs and the other Bosnians? In other words, how could you single out one group and, you know, deprive them of stuff that the regular Bosniaks needed?

POPE: Well, we couldn't always. But, the country was divided basically at that point into three rather clear regions. And on your map here I don't think I could exactly draw it up but we knew the line not only included Serbia and Montenegro but it also went out here, the line we were trying to enforce, went out here in eastern-

Q: Yes, I'm talking around the, I guess the green and that area.

POPE: Yes, exactly. And to the extent we could, we were trying to also keep- because that would have been the same as letting Milosevic have it. If you had had an unrestricted flow of oil products, for example, petroleum products into that eastern part of Bosnia. This part over in here. So, we did a good job. For example, there was a big flow of oil by small scale smugglers, across right here from Albania across into Montenegro. Sometimes they would be literally carrying in small amounts no bigger than a trash can. But barges filled with hundreds of those and shoving off in the night going across the lake and you could see the tracks going down, you could see the little beach area on the edge all covered with oil, like an oil spill. And part of it was putting pressure on the government in Albania, in Tirana, to try to seal that off, that was the weak part right there because there were ships along here enforcing this.

Q: Well one of the problems in Albania at the time was the region didn't have much of a government, did they?

POPE: Not much. Not much of a government, but we were putting the pressure on. I traveled out there and met with them, went up to that border to see it myself, to see the smuggling and it was really blatant. I think that the Director of Customs got fired and the Customs Director for that region got fired and I think they began to actually crack down on it.

Q: How about Romania? I mean, Romania's got oil and I would think that there would be a lot of smuggling that.

POPE: Not to my recollection. To my recollection the Romanians were quite cooperative. There probably was some across the river but it wasn't, it certainly was not sanctioned or abetted in any way. I think to the extent they could, they cracked down on it and Hungary and the Croats, everybody. I think the real, the main weak point was Albania there. For whatever reason, Milosevic decided to go to Dayton. And I think our efforts were at least some part of it.

Q: How did you find the European powers, this didn't really cut into any great economic interests of powers. I mean, nobody was making money out of Serbia so I take it that it would have been, you know, good unanimity as far as what your goal was.

POPE: As far as I could tell. I don't remember problems. I mean, sometimes different ones of us wouldn't come up with as many monitors as the chairman wanted or with a boat exactly when it was supposed to be there or something, those kind of administrative problems but not a policy.

Q: How did you find the White House supervision? Was there much interest or sort of given the job and go ahead and do it?

POPE: There was a lot of interest, at least on the part of Leon Fuerth. I don't know about the Vice President and the President exactly, but Leon Fuerth was very interested, and I sent him regular reports. He was available when I needed to see him, which wasn't very often. This was not a high-policy effort. This was a technical, more of a coordination effort. We got our marching orders, and we made sure everybody was on the same page.

Q: As an old Yugoslav hand, which got you into this, were you picking up any, at this point, the discontent of the lack of the United States doing something in Bosnia? You know, we had some people who resigned later on, sort of Bosnia was taking a terrible beating by the Serbs and we were basically staying out of it. Did you get any of that feeling?

POPE: I don't remember. Maybe. As I said, I did this for only one year and it was one of these years where you plunged in and very intensively met everybody and coordinated and flew off to Brussels. I just don't remember that. I guess I was so immersed in the minutiae of what I was doing.

Q: Okay, well we'll pick this up in '95 when you say you went to a very interesting experience. Where'd you go?

POPE: Yes. Capstone.

Q: Capstone.

POPE: Course for general officers at the National Defense University.

Q: Great. Well, we'll pick that up then.

POPE: Good.

Q: Okay. Today is the 3rd of July, 2006. Bill, tell me about Capstone first and then we'll talk about your experiences there.

POPE: Capstone's based on the legislation that created the whole concept of jointness. And suddenly escaping me, I want to say Nunn-Lugar but it's not.

Q: Is it Goldwater?

POPE: Yes, Goldwater-Nichols legislation and the whole concept is to make sure that these people who are newly promoted to generals and admirals get to know the other services and don't stay so parochial as it always was. And they try to have a flag-rank Foreign Service Officer in there when they can. My understanding is it doesn't always happen but often does. And I was able to be there in I guess it was May of '95 if I remember right. And it was a very interesting experience. I think there were 33 of us, 32 military and me, and I think, honestly, they learned a fair amount from me as I did from them and of course they learned a lot about each other. We started over at Ft. McNair at NDU and had a number of lectures by people who came in as well as we went around Washington. I remember we called on Sandy Berger who was the Deputy National Security Advisor at the time and people at that level. And then we traveled. We went to major military bases around the country, down to Langley Air Base down near Norfolk, Virginia. To Ft. Bragg and to Camp Lejeune and then out to TransCom and to the training base, Army's training base at Ft. Irwin, California. That was really interesting, being out there and seeing how they do the big stuff, tank battles and things like that. And on to various other bases around the country. And then we also went to Asia, went to China and Korea.

Q: How did you, I mean, Asia of course, I guess military people are lucky enough, I won't say for the opportunity but for the threat. I mean, this is what they're being paid for. And Asia, particularly Korea and China, seems will come up on any list of the five most likely long term problems or something.

POPE: Right.

Q: What was the impression that they came away from, especially China?

POPE: Well this was '95, of course, this was '95, long pre-al Qaeda or that anyone really understood anything about al Qaeda, so there was really a lot of focus in particular on China. And we were the guests of the People's Liberation Army and we traveled around with them and we watched them. We went to some of their bases and I remember seeing a kind of mock-up war game. I don't know whether it was a regularly scheduled one that we got to watch or whether it was scheduled for us, but I do remember the military people being extremely unimpressed with the level of sophistication. They were using Korean War era weapons. Now, that's a little more than 10 years ago and my understanding from what I read in the paper, I'm no expert on military affairs, but is that has changed very considerably in the last 10 years.

The other thing that our military colleagues understood was that the Chinese were on the front end of a big effort with a lot of money to modernize their military.

Q: Were they cutting down? I mean, you know, they had this huge army which in this day and age isn't very useful.

POPE: I don't remember whether at the time we knew they were cutting down. I believe they have in terms of numbers and way up in terms of technology and sophistication. They were just on the front end of that and I just remember where they were in 1995. My military colleagues were extremely unimpressed.

Q: What about the Koreans, South Koreans?

POPE: Tough but the North Korean army was just so huge just in terms of numbers, and the distance from the DMZ down to Seoul and other population centers is so short and our very small trip wire was only a few thousand, something like 37 thousand troops. And it certainly was going to be a hell of a thing if it happened. We went down into one of these tunnels that the North Koreans had dug and the South Koreans were always trying to find them and intercept them using various technologies. And we went down in one and it was very impressive, very sophisticated, going under, from under the DMZ into South Korea.

Q: While you were at Capstone could you rank or evaluate how the various men and women from the, really how the different services approached sort of foreign affairs or knowledge thereof?

POPE: Well, there were really smart people in all of them, obviously, or they wouldn't have made generals and admirals, very sophisticated. It's always dangerous to generalize but I found that broadly speaking the people did more or less fit the stereotypes I thought I had of the military. Air Force was techies, very high tech people; Navy polish, suave, kind of sophisticated kind of people but who did have a kind of a loner mentality, some of them at least because they're out at sea a lot.

Q: Yes, the right way, the wrong way, the Navy way.

POPE: That's right. And the Marines were really tough and straightforward and the majority was Army and they were real kind of tough and by-the-book kind of people. I found them a little Tabula Rasa in my recollection regarding foreign affairs and foreign policy. We came to the State Department and I remember speaking a fair amount in different class discussions and things because a lot of them didn't seem too clued in to foreign policy.

Q: No, foreign affairs is not the way to have reached flag rank of general.

POPE: They were smart and wanted to be and they did seem genuinely to want to understand the other services better and be purple, as they said, under Goldwater-Nichols, but I don't think they knew too much about foreign policy. I mean it's more than 10 years ago so that's my recollection.

Q: Oh yes. This is during the Clinton administration.

POPE: Yes.

Q: How did they feel, Clinton not having served in the military, how did they feel about the Clinton administration at this particular point?

POPE: I don't recall specifics but my recollection was lack of enthusiasm to put it mildly. I don't remember any of the military people I was dealing with who were big enthusiastic Bill and Hillary Clinton backers.

Q: What about, had we gotten involved in the Balkans by that time or not?

POPE: Yes, there was some involvement in the Balkans.

Q: And what was the feeling there?

POPE: I'm not 100 percent sure, but my sense was let's not rush into things where we shouldn't be treading, where we haven't been attacked and a not a lot of nation-building. Europeans should be doing this themselves; it's in their back yard. They may not all have felt that way. There were 30-plus people in this group; let's not just go rushing into all these little places.

Q: Were there efforts made to have these future flag officers aware of some of the trends that were going on in American life?

POPE: Yes. There were lots of lecturers who came, I remember being really impressed by the quality of people they got in there, both civilians and military. There were a number of three- and four-star generals who came to talk as well as people from NDU itself, scholars from the different war colleges and the other schools, as well as people coming in from the government and the Hill.

Q: Well, this would be '95 to '96. What happened, where'd you go?

POPE: After that I went to the- that was before I did the Serbian sanctions, I believe. Yes, I think that was before I was the head of the Serbian sanctions task force, which I did for about a year. And then from that was chosen to be the DCM in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Q: Okay. Well, let's just put on the record here, if we have not covered the Serbian sanctions, when you do review we'll just make a point of having another session to cover that.

POPE: Sure.

Q: Well you went to The Hague and you were there from when to when?

POPE: From '96 to '99.

Q: Who was the ambassador? How'd you get chosen for this because I'm sure this is a fairly significant job? I mean, because usually a professional is, a Foreign Service officer is usually there and a political appointee, some of real quality and some not end up as ambassador. How was it in your time? How'd you get the job?

POPE: Well, I applied for it, of course, and got short-listed by the DCM Committee, which I was grateful for and got chosen by the Ambassador, who was a political appointee, a Democrat, of course, a businessman from Atlanta. And he was one of the ones who the President could be proud of. Both parties can send some real turkeys, to be honest with you, and he was terrific, smart.

Q: Who was this?

POPE: His name was Terry Dornbush. He was a businessman from Atlanta; I believe he was in real estate. But very smart, well read, a very serious ambassador, worked hard, he was always there, read everything. You know, everything a good ambassador should be.

Q: How would you say the state of relations were between the Netherlands and the United States?

POPE: Excellent. There was nothing more we could have asked. I mean, there was obviously one little thing that rubbed Barry McCaffrey wrong and that was the drug business because they had this real dichotomy where they were really with us on almost everything and they really didn't want to hear it on drugs because they had these open coffeehouses as they called them in Amsterdam and The Hague and other big cities where you could just walk right in legally smoke marijuana. But in terms of international law enforcement, of course, they were a good ally in terms of that. It's just some people made a bit of a noise about the open smoking of pot. But otherwise in terms of our alliance, for example, part of NATO, before they restructured, the NATO central command was there, we had pre-positioning of stocks, military stocks there, they were with us in the Persian Gulf, enforcing sanctions on Iraq, for example. They had destroyers in the Persian Gulf. So they were excellent allies, couldn't ask for more.

Q: I'll come back to that in a minute but just on the drug thing, I'm sure, of course, we were looking with if not aloofness or disdain or whatever it is to this open drug market that was allowed in a few places but how did we evaluate in the long run, I mean, what was the general consensus, how this thing was working?

POPE: When you say this thing was working what do you mean?

Q: Well I mean in other words maybe this thing's maybe not the right word but in other words I mean we as a government, as a people do not believe in allowing the use of marijuana or anything like that.

POPE: Right.

Q: And here was a country which very in many ways a system that's somewhat similar to ours and having this and there have been thoughts about legalizing marijuana.

POPE: Right.

Q: I mean, it's a fairly movement in the States so I assume we were looking at this. I mean, during your time what was your impression on how the system worked?

POPE: Well the Dutch were convinced that by allowing regulated and open sale and use that it would keep criminal elements out of it, it would keep people from going farther. And of course there were people who were very convinced in the United States and some elsewhere in Europe, by the way, who were convinced that this is the road to perdition, that you start down this road, then it's another drug and another drug, eventually you're hooked and your life is ruined by starting in these legalized coffee shops. So we never really came to a consensus. But in terms of international law enforcement against smuggling of drugs into the United States, they were good allies and we shared information and that kind of stuff.

Q: Were there problems of Americans, particularly younger but maybe not necessarily younger, going there to partake in the-

POPE: Sure. Yes. Not just Americans.

Q: And did they overdo?

POPE: Not just Americans and some did.

Q: Because this is often the case of kids who are allowed to do one thing they'll always do more.

POPE: Right.

Q: I mean, if it's been forbidden.

POPE: Right. And not just Americans but from all over. Yes. But I don't remember that it was an epidemic, anything like that, but of course there were Americans of all stripes, tourists and older people who'd have a heart attack and younger people who'd step in front of a car and get hit and people who were coming just to smoke marijuana and never really got in trouble and others who overdid as you said. It was a real mixed bag.

Q: Was immigration much of a political issue? Because right now the Dutch government is fallen because of immigration.

POPE: It was already, yes. Mostly from the Caribbean and from South America.

Q: What were the problems?

POPE: I don't really remember all of the details of it but it was because of their colonies, Surinam and their colonies-

Q: Aruba and-

POPE: Yes, exactly, and people who had citizenship or were asserting their right to citizenship and they were starting to have pretty sizeable immigration. Then you had various alleged groups that were going to do bad things if more immigrants weren't admitted. So you had that, that's the immigration piece of it. But you also had a lot of, now that I recall, of people from the former Yugoslavia. And I remember there was some concern about them as we joined into the wars in that region that, for example, even though the majority of the Serbs, as I recall, who lived in the Netherlands were considered to be anti-Milosevic, the assumption was that somewhere within that larger group, for some reason the number 70,000 sticks in my mind, that within that larger group there would be a smaller group that would have perhaps pro-Milosevic sentiments, so the Dutch were very alert on that group. And then you had Iraqis and Kurds like you had in most of the European countries.

Q: Did the ones from Indonesia, had they been by this time pretty well absorbed in the system?

POPE: I think so. For example, I don't recall lots of native kinds of Dutch food. When people would say let's go out and have Dutch food they meant with rijsttafel and different dishes from Indonesia. A little bit like if you lived down in the Southwestern United States, let's go out and get a good old American meal of nachos and tacos. It was that kind of thing. I don't remember problems from the Indonesians. You remember there had been the Malaccans who had taken over a train?

Q: Yes, I remember that.

POPE: But I don't remember a lot of problems with that while I was there.

Q: Did the Dutch follow- were most of them, people you dealt with, pretty knowledgeable about American politics?

POPE: Very. They were knowledgeable about everything. Spoke excellent English, super smart. Had been everywhere, highly educated, very sophisticated. Not only the diplomats, of course, but politicians and businesspeople.

Q: Did you have a problem at that time, I'm not sure where the scandal about Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky was, but the impeachment and also from '94 or '95 and on sort of the almost war between Congress and the presidency, was this of concern to the Dutch?

POPE: It would come up in conversation sometimes, particularly his escapades with Monica Lewinsky and sometimes people would snicker a little bit, but I think most people were generally favorable towards the United States, towards the Clintons. They would snicker about this other business a bit but it kind of fit into the pattern, not so much their pattern. The Dutch are pretty straight up, but there's all the stuff that goes on in France and people have mistresses and all of that. So certainly in the European context this wasn't so unheard of.

Q: Well you were there I guess during the Kosovo flare up, weren't you?

POPE: I guess. I mean, I remember the Kosovo flare up but that might have been, I can't remember the timing on that, whether I was in Rome by that point.

Q: It might have been close. Anyway, it didn't, the fact that we started a bombing campaign and all, Serbia didn't-

POPE: Not too much. As I say, they were very strong allies. I mean, they didn't agree with us on every single thing but they and the Brits were probably the closest to us sympathetically, ideologically of anybody in Europe. So it made it a pleasure to serve there.

Q: Was there a residue of, I don't know, guilt or concern about what had happened in Srebrenica during the-

POPE: Yes, they were very traumatized.

Q: -the Dutch battalion basically, facing a very difficult situation, I'm not, but still, at the same time, I mean, they were military soldiers there and they let stepped aside and let happen what happened. And was that something that was a part of the concern at the time?

POPE: It was bubbling and it was a frequent issue. And they were very traumatized by it. Unhappy about it, embarrassed, defensive, whatever adjective you want. I remember talking to them, I said, you were only something like 225 men against thousands of Serbian fighters. And I said I understand the position you were in and I just don't understand how you could have expected to defend those people with 200 and some soldiers if you'd gone into an all-out fight. And there are people who are really gnashing teeth and wringing hands and were so upset that this had happened on their watch.

Q: But in our action later I understand particularly the Dutch air forces were particularly quite good, I mean, a good reputation.

POPE: All of them, all Dutch forces, air force, their navy. As I say, they had frigates in the Gulf, as I remember, destroyers, frigates and destroyers in the Gulf and they were really very solid militarily and every other way. They were just small; they had a very small everything.

Q: How were relations between particularly France and the Netherlands and Germany and the Netherlands?

POPE: At one level it was the EU, because the EU by this point already you'd had Maastricht and was already moving towards being something beyond just an economic organization. Already the economic piece of the three pillars had, like a spider throwing out more and more webs of silk, had thrown out so many that they were all really ensnared and there was a lot of debate going on about the new currency, the Euro and should everybody really be in it and had some cheated to make their books look right and there was a lot of debate about that, France included. Because the Netherlands had what was considered the strongest currency in all of Europe at that point and there was lots in the papers about the Dutch were at one point the sick man of Europe and had had the weakest currency and we worked hard and sacrificed. Now they had their house completely in order and the strongest currency and then there are others who are meeting the so-called targets with smoke and mirrors and maybe we shouldn't do this and others were saying we absolutely should because we are good Europeans. And it was an interesting debate. And France, I remember, was in the smoke-and-mirrors camp, as were the Italians, from the Dutch point of view. The Germans at that point were the tough guys. They also had a strong currency and they were insisting that there be accountability and that countries actually be punished if they breached certain norms, if the Euro ever actually came into being. And of course they've gotten way away from that now, but then they and the Dutch were the strong people about that.

Q: I assume our role was to encourage greater connectivity to the European Union?

POPE: Sure, absolutely. We had from the end of World War II, before the end of World War II and we were still doing it. There were people who would say or stories written in the paper that the U.S. doesn't really want a strong EU and wants to pick us off one at a time and those kinds of things, but that was never borne out by the facts.

Q: Well then, you left there in '99?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Whither?

POPE: To Rome.

Q: As what?

POPE: As the DCM.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

POPE: He was a former congressman from Philadelphia named Tom Foglietta.

Q: One of the real problems of sending, particularly in Italy there's a tendency to send people who have been of Italian background want to go there and bask in the fact I came back as an ambassador. My family left there poor and barefoot and look at me now. I served as Consul General in Naples at one point and you know, these immigrants who'd done well aren't really received in Roman society. How did it work?

POPE: When he left, after Bush was elected and he left at the beginning of '01, the Italians, many Italians asked me privately, both in and out of the government, don't send another Italian-American. You always do this and you don't understand; you think we want an Italian-American. We don't necessarily want an Italian-American. We want the best possible candidate, Italian-American or otherwise. But not somebody automatically and we just don't think you should do that and send a Polish-American to Poland and an Irish-American to Ireland, etc. We don't practice that kind of thing and we don't think you should. We hope you won't.

Q: Well, you were there from '99 to when?

POPE: To 2002.

Q: 2002. What were the issues in Italy at the time?

POPE: Well, when I first came, of course, there was, I mean all the way through, a lot of work together on organized crime. There are not that many FBI offices in the world, LEGAT, it's called, Legal Attaché^{1/2}, we had a big FBI office there, so that was one of them. The Balkans was still a problem so we did a lot of very productive work with the Italians on transnational organized crime. That was a big one. And I rejuvenated our internal law enforcement committee. We had almost 30 agencies; this was a big embassy, one of the biggest Class I missions, and I pulled together all of the law enforcement-related entities into a committee to press for more sharing of information internally and alertness to what's going on. And then of course the Balkans was still an issue.

Q: And Kosovo was a-

POPE: Yes, Kosovo was still an issue. And Serbia-Montenegro, a lot of tension there.

Q: How did the Italians feel about the Kosovo business? Because they had had this tie to Albania and they had a lot of Albanians who ended up in Italy as refugees.

POPE: Right.

Q: Did that play any role?

POPE: I don't think so. They were a neighbor across the Adriatic and on a really good day, clear day you could actually see the other side. So the Italians were acutely aware of it and they were the frontline of defense, but I don't think their policy differed too much from others. They supported Serbian territorial integrity but they didn't feel that it was a good idea for the Serbs to be slaughtering the Kosovars or for the Kosovars to be slaughtering and putting pressure on the little Serb minority that was left. So I don't remember that they were particularly out of step. They did have some carabinieri stationed on the other side of the Adriatic but that was more for crime prevention reasons.

Q: I imagine crime, I mean, you had the Mafia and you had the Camorra. I mean, was it the 'Ndrangheta I guess way down in the boot of Italy. I mean, Italy had a very solid criminal class.

POPE: Yes, that's right.

Q: Did they, was there operation of such a nature that we were mainly concerned with it or was it sort of an internal Italian?

POPE: Both. There was an internal dimension to it which we on occasion tried to help them with a bit, but it was mainly the cross-border aspects of crime which wasn't all the Mafia. The Italians themselves were very concerned with the groups that had begun to get themselves solidly implanted on the other side of the Adriatic - the Russian mafia, the Albanian mafia. Some of them were extremely vicious, made the Italian mafia look like Sunday school teachers. And they were very concerned about what was going on. Obviously everybody's glad for the end of communism and Milosevic's fall and all of that, but with the break up of Yugoslavia and smaller countries and a non-Communist but weak Albania and Kosovo that was in rebellion, there's a lot of area for crime to come in when government isn't strong. And they were really concerned about that, about drugs, weapons, nuclear materials coming out of the former Soviet Union and immigrants.

Q: Italy also, I mean, in the trafficking of human beings, mainly prostitutes coming out of Eastern Europe.

POPE: Yes but not only.

Q: They were, I mean, Italy was sort of a collection point.

POPE: They were. And by the way it was not only prostitutes. I mean, a lot of it was economic migrants too. There were prostitutes but it's also economic migrants who were just trying to get into Europe or to go on to the U.S. or Canada for economic reasons. They couldn't walk across like you can from Canada or Mexico, so it was harder to get in. So there were those factors as well. And the Italians, I remember, asked for additional help because they would say that, if you took their coastline and straightened it all out it would be the longest coastline of anybody and they're coming across from Albania and from Montenegro and different places across here. They've got these swift boats; they're faster than anything we've got, the Italians would say. And they're smuggling cigarettes and drugs and guns and people. The Italians asked the rest of the European Union for financial and other kinds of help to try to seal this border down here because then you have Schengen of course. And once somebody's in, unless you have the bad luck of getting in a traffic accident, you can basically go anywhere you want unchallenged, just like inside the U.S. So that was a big issue.

That wasn't the only issue. We spent a fair amount of time in the Embassy. Well first of all, as I say, we had almost 30 agencies. This was before the formation of DHS, Department of Homeland Security so you had a lot of individual elements like INS and Customs and of course Internal Revenue, Secret Service. Internal Revenue is not part of DHS but Secret Service and others and all those were all independent agencies that had offices at the Embassy in Rome and serviced various areas including North Africa or Africa from there, so we had a really pretty sizeable group and so we covered every issue you could imagine. Social Security was also there, for example. Social Security because in Sicily there was a big population of people who had been born in Italy, especially in Sicily, had emigrated to the United States, had become citizens, had worked for 40 years, retired and then gone back. And they were citizens just like you and me and were eligible for various kinds of citizen services and consular services, so the Social Security had their hands full. And Internal Revenue too because these people were paying taxes. So all of the elements were busy. We were involved as an Embassy in everything you could imagine, regional as well as bilateral with the Italians.

One of the things that I spent a lot of my time on, in addition to overall management and the most senior kind of political approaches, demarches and things, was the military relationship. Not too long before I came, we'd had this very tragic accident up in the north with a plane that had flown too low and had cut a wire and a lot of people were killed, mostly young people, skiers. And it was really bad and it was still reverberating when I got there, even though it was prior to my time.

Q: As I recall there was at least allegations that the men involved, the pilots anyway, had tried to cover up and their superiors may have helped them.

POPE: There were a lot of allegations. They were eventually acquitted. And it did not go down well. The incident happened before I came, I think about a year before I came, but it was still echoing, and even our best friends in Italy were really unhappy about it. And of course people who weren't so friendly to us were using it as well. But the acquittal came while I was there and you could imagine headlines were not too happy. They were acquitted because their altimeter was broken and they didn't know that they were at 300 feet instead of whatever height they were supposed to be.

Q: Yes, it's a little hard to think that somebody can look out the window of the cockpit and be that far off, particularly with mountains on either side.

Well. Did you suffer from a lot of demonstrations?

POPE: No. No, not very many. There'd be the occasional one across the street I remember looking out; I remember there was once there was a group of nuns. What were they doing? Must have been something to do with the Balkans, hands off of somebody, but all very peaceful, 20 nuns across the street, very few protesting.

Q: Well one of our, you know, trainings in crisis is how to deal with enraged nuns, you know.

POPE: Well, that's good. But that was very few. And when there were things happening in Rome that didn't necessarily have to do with us but where the planned route of march was in our area. The Italians were really good about getting whatever resources were needed, including these big armored vehicles, to block streets. They had a lot of strikes against and sometimes there'd be a line of march that would come from an area and would go down below the Embassy. And to make sure that nobody wandered up the street a couple of blocks, the police would bring these big blue armored vehicles and whatever they had to and just keep ringing it off and just have these folks march. And so they were very good, the Italians.

Q: How did you find political reporting? Maybe I mentioned this before but when I was Consul General in Naples I was not an Italian hand, I'd been in Korea beforehand, but I used to find the political reporting from Rome and the interests in Rome to be a little bit unworldly almost. This was a bit back in '79 to '81 is the period. But reporting on a change of a couple percentage points in a local election or something or there'd be a change in government and it seemed like, you know, nothing really happened; these people were just exchanging places and it was sort of viewed with a great deal of disdain down in southern Italy. I mean, this is just a minuet that was going up in Rome. But did you find yourself as not being a real sort of Italian hand? Or that sometimes our people who are dealing with get almost too precious in dealing with changes in the government?

POPE: I think there was less of that by the second half of the 90s than there may have been before. For one thing, there had been a broad shift in the way reporting was done. CNN of course had made a huge difference in terms of spot reporting; we weren't doing so much of that anymore. And I think that reporting was more sparse in the sense of not so many numbers of cables and that kind of thing. It happened under my watch so I don't know how objective I am. Yes, and I wasn't an Italian hand, but I felt like we did a pretty good job in using our resources and in trying to report what was important. Obviously, if a government fell, everybody wanted to know who the new defense minister was going to be and the new foreign minister and finance minister, that kind of thing, and what they were going to, what changes there'd be, if any, for U.S. interests; that was obviously first and then whatever else we could find out was welcome. But in terms of over reporting minutiae I don't think so. By then, I think we understood that we were not in that business so much anymore.

Q: Well by this point had the Internet got to the point where the desk officer in Washington could read-

POPE: Sure.

Q: -the daily newspaper maybe even before you got hold of it.

POPE: Yes.

Q: This had to make quite a difference.

POPE: It does.

Q: Because you know, I mean, I take it that one was no longer reporting what was in the paper unless you were saying what it means as opposed to-

POPE: We were in a certain sense. If we woke up in the morning and read the papers and watched the news and saw something hot that we knew would be an issue in Washington, by being six hours ahead we were able to put together draft press guidance, for example, and zap it back to Washington. We were not disadvantaged by being behind Washington; we were ahead of Washington, so that was helpful. So no, we were not so much reporting what was in the paper but reporting on what it meant as well as providing draft guidance if we thought it might rise to the level of being asked to the spokesman, for example.

Q: How did you find the Italian Government? Again, I go back, sort of in history, where Henry Kissinger used to say that in his European travels hopping by Rome was really more a matter of form because there was nobody really to talk to because it was so diffuse and all. But in your time how was it? Was that changed?

POPE: I certainly do not agree with what you just said. That got sort of corrected for five years by Berlusconi's government, but one thing we heard up to the time that Berlusconi came in was from people outside who did not really know Italy. Oh, it is so unstable. You have got one government a year, 58 governments in 58 years after the war and what kind of country is that anyway? But as you were hinting there is a great deal of stability underneath that top veneer, and you had a lot of the same people, you had especially a lot of the most senior civil servants providing lot of continuity in government. And the people I was dealing with, at least, were all of really high quality, smart people in of course the Foreign Ministry but in across the government, in finance, very sophisticated, worldly, bright people.

Q: Well here you have, I mean, you alluded to it and I realize you want to maintain propriety and all that, but how did it work? You had an ambassador who was not essentially an Italian hand. I mean, outside of being of Italian descent but he came out of Congress, came out of local politics from North Philadelphia was it?

POPE: Yes.

Q: And you had, you know, major issues to deal with. How did this work? I am getting a smile and you are being a very good DCM, very impressive.

POPE: It mostly fell to me, to be honest with you.

Q: Often the ambassadors in a case like this spend a good bit of time going around opening exhibits or getting out shaking hands and doing that. Is that kind of where things-?

POPE: Not so much.

Q: Not so much?

POPE: I was doing that too.

Q: Were there any relations, I realize we had our ambassador and all, but did the Vatican play much of a role at this time?

POPE: It is interesting because they kept saying not. The Italian politicians would say we are independent and we do not report to the Pope, but as soon as an election was approaching and they were starting to run for office you would see them going to call on Cardinal Sodano or whoever it was. They would make a big deal of calling on the cardinal and making family-friendly pronouncements and so it was definitely still a factor. Our embassies, of course, were separate. We provided administrative support to our Embassy to the Holy See, and they were in a completely separate building in another part of town and we did not really intersect too much but we watched for Vatican influence on things. When the Pope pronounced on issues of world peace and war and whatever, it would reverberate not only in Italy but of course far beyond Italy. And we had two terrific ambassadors while I was there; they were both excellent. The first was Lindy Boggs, former member of Congress. She is from New Orleans. Absolutely classy lady, wonderful lady.

Q: Came from a major political family.

POPE: Major political family. And she was terrific. And she was not so young; I think she was already more than 80, if I remember right. And she was full of vitality and she entertained a lot and she called on officials and traveled around Italy and called on cardinals as I recall. She was excellent.

And then we got Jim Nicholson who is currently the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs. And he came out of the 2000 campaign where he was the campaign chairman. And he was absolutely top notch too. He is smart, energetic, worked really hard, developed a good relationship with the Pope and was very active.

Q: From your vantage point, how was Italy fitting into the European community?

POPE: Interesting. Because they considered themselves one of the big four; France, UK, Germany and Italy. And they really did not like it when there were meetings of the French President, the British Prime Minister and the German Chancellor and they were not involved. They really, really did not care for that. And it was clear that there was still a lot of ambivalence at the very top of the EU about where Italy fit. They believed that they were one of the big four and the other three had these frequent meetings in places where they were not involved and it was clear that they at least some of the time considered them in the rest of the group. The Italians really did not care for that at all. But they were very dedicated Europeanists at the same time, dedicated to the EU and supporting the EU and working through the EU. After Maastricht, increasingly not only in the economic side of things but on the political side, military and other ways, they were very devout Europeanists.

Q: Did we use the Italians, it is not a very nice term, but to carry our water for us within the European Union? In other words, there would be issues and use them as somebody who was friendly to us to deal with maybe the French and others or whatnot?

POPE: We tried to influence everybody in the European Union, including the French, to be friendly inside the EU to promote policies inside the EU that we liked or try to slowdown developments that we did not like. I think carry water is probably too strong a term but of course. We talked to the Dutch when I was there and they were the President of the EU during one of the years I was there; I think it was '97. And we had President Clinton come for the US-EU Summit and during that six months we interacted with the Dutch very intensively to try to convince them of the wisdom of advancing some of the things we were interested in inside the Presidency. And we did the same with the Italians and I know my colleagues all around Europe were trying the same thing. Carry water is probably too much, but there were some things.

For example, one of the big arguments that was going on, everything changed after 9/11 but before 9/11, there was a panoply of things we were talking about, Kyoto and genetically modified organisms, that was a big deal, agriculture, and privacy. The Italians in particular, not so much the Italians but the head of the Italian Privacy Commission was an Italian lawyer who also was the head of the European Privacy Commission and he was a real ardent advocate of not sharing information across borders and really withholding. And I remember being at a meeting in the Hague when a senior USG official came from Washington and was talking to the Dutch businesspeople about these new privacy regulations that were coming out. He said essentially that your tax guilders are paying for the EU to put in the following policies. What do you think about this? And he was outlining about how if you, for example, have bought a subsidiary in the U.S. you cannot transfer payroll data, personnel data or anything else from that company back to your headquarters here or from your headquarters back to that company. It is illegal because you are violating the rights of your employees. And you should have seen the faces around this room of these businesspeople. How can we operate if we can't share our own data? And this was the head of the commission in Italy who was the head of the European effort on privacy, data privacy, was really strong and not very amenable to persuasion.

Q: Did this get resolved or not?

POPE: Not while I was there, but some of what I have read it has lessened to some degree. They have seen the light they cannot adopt super extreme positions, that within reason there has to be some amount of data transfer, particularly at the corporate level.

Q: What about the _____ and cultural policy? Italy really- this is really a German-French issue but the Italians, how do they feel about this?

POPE: I do not remember. Like the others they were always talking about how our taxpayers' money goes and we should not be subsidizing somebody's farmer to create mountains and mountains of butter. The thing that I remember that particularly exercised the Italians was protecting their branded products like Parma hams and different kinds of cheeses and things. The thing that really got them was the European Commission, the central regulators coming out of Brussels reaching into small villages and small mountaintop operations that had operated the same for hundreds of years in creating these very special cheeses. They would literally stir them by hand and that kind of thing. And they would get these regulations down from Brussels that you have to create separate men's and women's restrooms and all of these different things and these little mountaintop operations were maybe as big as the room we are sitting in, did not have any restroom, they had a little outhouse partway down the mountain behind and there were no men's and women's anything, and wheelchair ramps and all of these different things for operations that really should not have been affected. And so the Italians really were unhappy on a number of scores. I think it was less the common agricultural policy and more on their specialized names; Parma keeps coming back to me. But that type of thing and also the regulations that were ensnaring. Because the way the Italian economy was set up, it actually encouraged, because of taxation and regulations, it actually encouraged enterprises to be very small; there were few big ones like Fiat. But there were special regulations, as I recall, for under 15 employees. They did not have to file all kinds of papers and taxes and things they did not have to do if they were a small business. And so what you had, when you had some entrepreneur he would set up 10 different enterprises with 14 people each instead of one that had 140, 150 employees. And these regulations really hit these little enterprises coming out of Brussels.

Q: What was happening politically in Italy? Was Berlusconi a figure- he had not achieved power yet, had he, or did?

POPE: Not when I came but before I left, yes.

Q: Well how did we view the Berlusconi phenomenon and also, you know, what is it, the Northern Movement and all?

POPE: Yes, Lega Nord, Northern League.

Q: How were those viewed?

POPE: Well Northern League was viewed negatively by everybody, a little bit like Le Pen in France as being really too isolationist and too anti-immigrant. There was some way when you could be a little bit more conservative and a little more circumspect without going that far. The first couple of years I was there, there were left-wing governments and we had perfectly fine relations with them and when we needed help on anything we got it, from a security point of view, for example. I did feel, this was me personally, I did feel that we perhaps had allowed ourselves to get a little bit too oriented toward the parties of the left and too knowledgeable; I did not know so much about the parties of the right. And in addition to trying to enhance Embassy relations with the U.S. military around Italy, one of the things I was trying to do was get our political compass a little bit more toward the middle and so I made a point of getting to know some of the people who were going to be coming in, Fini and some of the others. And in retrospect I think that turned out to be the right thing. Because I was charged for most of the year 2001 and that is when Berlusconi was running and then he came in and was consolidating his new prime ministership.

Q: Did we get any feel for Berlusconi and the United States?

POPE: You mean before?

Q: Yes, before.

POPE: Well he said all the right things about wanting to be the best ally in Europe of the United States, etcetera. And his philosophy certainly fit with the new administration in the United States.

Q: When the new American administration came in, did that cause any changes in the Italian policy, would you say?

POPE: Not so much because it was not very long after that when Berlusconi was elected. Bush came in at the end of January of '01 and Berlusconi was elected in May and took over immediately; they do not have as long a transition. The new Bush administration was still getting consolidated at that point, so it happened more or less simultaneously. Italy has always been one of our closest friends. We have huge ties economically, but also blood and history and everything else.

Q: How did 9/11 hit?

Okay, we are going to stop at this point and we will pick this up in 2001, September 11.

POPE: Yes.

Q: 9/11 and Berlusconi and the Bush Administration are both pretty new on the scene and how did that work out.

POPE: Yes. We had been concerned, I want to say one thing before you turn it off, we had been concerned over the year 2001 and even in 2000 about terrorism. It was not new and we had actually, I had actually closed the Embassy at the beginning of 2001 so we can talk about that a little bit too.

Q: Good, great.

Okay, today is the 29th of September, 2006. I do not know if we talked about Berlusconi coming in but you know, there had been, and I am not up to date on this but sort of the Lombardi group or something. I mean, the idea of sort of a Northern separatist group and all and Berlusconi. How did we view, at the time, when he came in, and then we will move on to other things, how did we view him?

POPE: Who, Berlusconi?

Q: Yes, on the Italian scene.

POPE: Well there had been leftist governments for quite a long time, left of center, with which we had had good relations. It had worked well. Even in the early days of the Bush Administration, they were very attentive. I mentioned having closed the Embassy, that was in early January of '01, it was just before President Bush was inaugurated but it was understood the general policy thrust where he was going. The Italians pulled out the stops to ring our Embassy with additional security and do whatever we asked for. This was D'Alema, who is now the foreign minister by the way, the D'Alema Government, so there is not an issue there, but it was obvious that a Berlusconi Government was going to be more simpatico, more ideologically attuned to the new administration in the United States. He was a breath of fresh air, in a certain way. I mean, lots of people were appalled that he was coming in, this guy who was an incredibly wealthy businessman and had been an entertainer on a cruise ship as a young man and all of this kind of thing, but there were others who said he was exactly what we need, let us shake it up, the old political establishment where you see all the same faces again and again, let us shake it up and get some new people in there.

Q: This is 48, I guess, it has been sort of the same merry-go-round.

POPE: Just about. And get some new people in and get some more modern economic procedures and laws and let us shake it up. You remember just very recently there was an election in Sweden, not to get too far off the subject, but the Social Democrats have been in power so long. When any one party is in power so long they get stale, they tend to go a little off the tracks and you need somebody new and maybe it was that way in Italy, at that point.

Q: Well you mentioned closing the embassy. What was the threat and how did you get information and what was the problem?

POPE: The threat was Islamic terrorists in Rome going to actually bomb the Embassy. The information came from a not-unexpected channel. And we had some late meetings, late night, middle-of-the-night meetings and various opinions of what we should do and I basically decided and informed Washington and they were very supportive of it. And this was nine months before September 11, eight months before. And there was a big outcry in Rome, there was a huge outcry about it. Some people understood but others ... I remember a very senior retired politician who had been out of politics for a long time but still sounded off in the papers from time to time who was just fulminating about this; the Americans are trying to embarrass us, there is no such thing as Islamic terrorism, what are you talking about, I know what this really is, this is really an American disguised protest over our policy on the death penalty. That was the most imaginative of all of the explanations of why we closed the Embassy, for one workday only, and the Italians ringed the place and we reopened the next workday. This was a Friday; we reopened on a Monday. And I can assure you it had nothing to do with the Italians' well known policy opposing the death penalty, it was just, it was classic. You know that expression in Italian, that wonderful expression, "dietrologia," what is really behind it, you know, the sun came up this morning, what does he mean by that, what is the really meaning behind that? But that was really a stretch, even by Italian standards, to think that we would close our embassy for a day in disguised protest over the Italian policy on the death penalty without actually saying here is what we are doing and why. Silly.

Q: As you were making the decision to close the embassy, what were some of the particular thought processes? Why keep it open under obviously heavy guard or why close it? I mean, what would closing mean politically? You cannot help it in any country but particularly a country like Italy where there is something behind everything, you are sending a message. Can you talk a little about that?

POPE: We were not trying to send any message. It was just that the timeframe, if this was good information, the timeframe was so short, there was just no time and it was about protecting people. And it was a judgment call. And it did not happen, so either I made the wrong judgment and it was not going to happen, or they pulled back and it was going to happen.

Q: Was anybody arrested on this thing?

POPE: I cannot tell you for sure. There was another group that was arrested at the same time and I recall that very clearly, or a little after, who had maps and things like that with them, unrelated to the closure, and I cannot remember whether there was.

Q: By the time you were there had the whole thing with the Potere Operaio and the Red Brigade, was that all gone?

POPE: It was until, I have forgotten exactly-

Q: These, by the way, were terrorist organizations essentially in the '70s, maybe going back a bit, homegrown terrorist organizations.

POPE: Right. Not too long after I came an aide to the labor minister was gunned down on the street in Rome. There was a note that the authorities tracked to the very same typewriter, one of those old-fashioned manual typewriters that had been used in the '60s and '70s by the Red Brigades, the very same one.

Q: Those are the ones who killed Moro.

POPE: Among others, yes. And this was the, I called it the grandsons of the Red Brigades, and they finally did break that and arrest some people who were trying to reconstitute themselves, obviously much younger than the original ones. But they did have the same typewriter, so clearly they were linked in some way. And there was at least one other while I was there, incident, having to do with the Red Brigades. There was another one in Milan, I think, attacking somebody on a bicycle, a senior official as he was arriving home.

Q: When Berlusconi came in one of the always problems of Italy political thing is, you know, rather both corruption and using the government influence and all. How did we view that? I mean, did we see it was going to get worse or better or?

POPE: I do not remember spending a whole lot of time thinking about the internal domestic government corruption-type thing. I mean, our focus was overwhelmingly on foreign policy, had been initially on Balkans and getting over the Cavalese incident. Subsequently, by the time Berlusconi came, we were really starting to focus on the relationship with the U.S., new president, new prime minister. Shortly after that President Bush came out in July of '01 for the G8 Summit that was held up in Genoa. And it was only his second trip abroad as President and very shortly after that you had 9/11 and that overwhelmed everything. We were not focused on how well-behaved any particular government was internally.

Q: Just one further question then we will get to other things. During this time, how did the relationship with the Vatican work from the American Embassy to Italy in Rome? I mean, obviously we have an ambassador to the Vatican and all that but still you are sharing each other's territory and the Catholic Church is a tremendous influence in Italy. In your time how did we view that relationship with our ambassador or ambassadors?

POPE: Well there was never the slightest problem or issue. We had two absolutely terrific ambassadors to the Holy See while I was there. The first one was Lindy Boggs, widow of Hale Boggs, later long-time representative herself; she was absolutely wonderful, delightful and very effective. She was really hard working, very effective; she was absolutely delightful. They kept in their lane and we kept in our lane. And obviously we did follow internal politics and we did find it really interesting during the Italian campaign in late 2000 and early 2001, it was interesting to watch politicians who had not been near a church in their adult lives suddenly calling on cardinals, as long as there were a lot of cameras around. So it was interesting to see it. But I just do not remember ever having the slightest issue of getting in either lane. We provided administrative support and Marines to their small embassy which was over near the Circo Massimo and otherwise we stayed out of each other's lanes.

Q: The Bush G8 Summit, of course this was an Italy focus but how did that work for you all?

POPE: It was a huge effort, an enormous effort. I have forgotten the number but the Embassy sent something like 300 people up there, it was so big. We sent people, a big swath of people from the embassy plus people from consulates and people over from Milan. It was in Genoa, and it had been selected by the previous government and dropped on the Berlusconi Government with about two months to go before it was going to be held. It was about as difficult a spot in Italy to have it given that-

Q: I was going to say Genoa is just not that big a place.

POPE: It is not big and it has these little narrow, twisting streets. I can recall the Secret Service was not really very enthusiastic, but we had nothing to do with the choice of it. That is where they decided to do it and we had to make the best of it. But it was an even bigger effort than a presidential visit normally would have been, given the complications. It was far from us, we did not have representation there. If it had been in Milan, for example, we have a big consulate that is larger than many embassies and that would have made all the difference. But it was a big effort. It finally worked out smooth as silk in the end, except for the riots. You know, the anarchists who all dressed in black and who were smashing windows.

Q: They killed a policeman didn't they?

POPE: No. A policeman killed one of them. But if you look at the films, and of course there was a huge outcry, how could a policeman kill an innocent protestor, and you look at the films, and a police jeep-type vehicle had gotten separated from all of the others and was surrounded by people in black who had black masks on, by the way. They were masked and were attacking this jeep and you had a young police reservist who was about 19 or 20 years old inside this vehicle being attacked from all sides, and the one guy had this cylinder, you could see it.

Q: It looked like a fire extinguisher.

Q: It looked like a fire extinguisher but the guy who was being attacked from all sides, this 20-year-old police or 19-year-old police reservist being attacked, saw something being tossed into his vehicle which could have been a bomb or a flammable thing like some kind of grenade. He fired at this guy and killed him. And there was a huge outcry. Honestly I thought he was justified but, you know, it was not our call to decide it; I thought he was justified. These were the same people who had been going down streets attacking people, smashing windows, smashing bank windows with rocks and clubs they brought with them for this purpose, wearing masks; these were not law-abiding citizens who were peacefully protesting. The people who were peacefully protesting, and there were a significant number, included nuns and normal people, but they were dressed normally and they had signs and they marched peacefully and they were left alone. I thought that the guys in black were basically terrorists of a kind.

Q: Yes. Well I mean, there is this group which seems to take a more virulent posture than they do in the United States.

POPE: Much. I had not known much about them but they are actually a very scary group and there are some apparently who, where they get their money I wonder, but who just go from country to country to country and even set up little training bases, not just to camp in while they are waiting but how to attack police, how to attack buildings. Then they come dressed in masks. I think the police have every right to find and arrest all those people.

Q: Yes. Well let's come to, I guess, 9/11.

POPE: Yes.

Q: Where were you, tell me, where were you and what were you doing and what happened?

POPE: It is interesting. It is ironic. I was at the Embassy having just come back from spending the morning out at the Ambassador's residence. We had no ambassador at the time so we were using the Residence for a variety of things. We had set up an off-site because the Foreign Service Institute had sent out a team for training for disaster situations. So we had that team that morning and we had done some scenarios. Instead of actually running it, I decided to sit back and let the acting DCM do so. I had named the number three person at the Embassy as the acting DCM, and she was chairing the mock disaster. One scenario was a big plane crash. I have forgotten what the other scenarios were, but I spent half a day out there. They kept going and I came back to the Embassy and grabbed a bite to eat and went to my desk. That is when somebody said to turn on the television. It was really ironic that we had been playing those kinds of games that very morning.

Q: What did you, when you saw this, I mean, as the news, the first crash seemed like an accident.

POPE: Yes.

Q: The second crash obviously not and then, you know, we knew the Pentagon and all. What did we all do in Rome at the time and then what sort of instructions were coming out?

POPE: Well, like everybody, I did think the first one was an accident. I remember seeing that smoke plume come and I thought unbelievable, if the pilot could just have maintained enough control to go to one side of the other but he went right into the middle of it. Isn't that unbelievably tragic? And then I very quickly understood what was going on. We closed down, started sending people home and pulled together the Emergency Action Committee to decide what to do and there were lots of ... The phones were ringing off the hook, cables flashing back and forth and we got very good guidance and cooperation from the Department, from the Bureau of European Affairs, DS. Diplomatic Security was sending stuff out, the Italians ringed the place again, more than they had normally, they had a fair amount already around and they ringed the place. I felt we reacted to it pretty well.

Q: Our consulate what did-?

POPE: Same. I was on the phone immediately to the consuls general, the three principal officers, and they sent people home, we shut down. It was already mid-afternoon, and we just started filtering people out, closed down and decided what to do.

Q: What was the reaction that you were observing in Italy to this?

POPE: It was shock, dismay. I never met an Italian who did not have a relative in the United States and lots of them in New York. And shock, dismay, horror. Very shortly after that we had people appearing with bouquets of flowers and very much like the funeral of Princess Diana or after Diana was killed and outside Buckingham Palace there was this mountain of flowers; we had the same, we had wreaths being put up against our gate and flowers, people outside holding candles. I went out and talked to a lot of people and they were all, there was extreme solidarity. Then phone calls started coming. I got called by the President of Italy, Carlo Ciampi, and went over there about six our time, which was about noon Washington time, and had a one-one-one with him. He had a message for President Bush, which expressed extreme solidarity. He was angry, basically; they cannot do this to us and we will do something about this.

Q: Was it pretty well understood, I mean, in many ways, probably the most sophisticated people in the continent were the Italians as far as dealing with things, where this came from? Because you know, at first, I mean, there was some, I would not say controversy but you know, I mean, also there are some planes crash and there is no sort of note left behind and all.

POPE: I do not remember any question about it. I do not remember that anybody had any doubts who did it and basically why. And of course Berlusconi sent a message to the President as well and my phone was ringing off the hook from ministers and head of the national police. What do you need and what can we do? The various groups, the parliamentary groups came to call, the President of the Senate came down and we had almost like a little informal prayer ceremony in the portico of the Embassy. The largest mosque in all of Europe is in Rome and they have a very enlightened and very moderate leadership and the leadership of that came out very, very quickly with a ringing denunciation of such terrorism. It is un-Islamic, we oppose it, we do not support it in any way, we support our friends, our American friends, we are horrified and aghast at this. Then they came to the Embassy, and I received them. And then later, my wife and I went to the mosque to have tea and have a mini-vigil with them and be quiet with them awhile. And the Jewish community had a special service for the dead at the Grand Synagogue of Rome. It was an amazing time. And President Ciampi organized a huge, it was just gigantic, an interfaith service for the dead at Saint John in Lateran, Saint Giovanni in Laterano.

Q: Saint John of the Chains, yes.

POPE: And they had the head Imam and the Rabbi of Rome and Cardinal and Protestant Minister from the International Baptist Church and my wife and I there along with the President and his wife and then all the whole cabinet and everybody was there and it was ... Oh and the other thing that was so impressive, something that I will never forget, I see it when I close my eyes, the Mayor of Rome put together a torchlight parade that was probably two- the night of the 13th or maybe 14th, I think the 13th, that started near the Coliseum. We were given torches, not flashlights but real torches, and he and I were at the front and right in front of us were people carrying a banner - No to terrorism, support America. It was dark and we were walking. Behind us were thousands and thousands of people carrying torches. It looked like a sea of lava coming down from a volcano at night because it was kind of snaking around the streets behind us. I looked back several times; I was almost in tears, it was a stunning thing. And we went all the way around and came all the way back to the Piazza Venezia, where a big stage was set up, and the mayor, gave a ringing denunciation of terrorism and support for America. If New York bids for the 2012 Olympics, we will withdraw our bid because we will support New York, etcetera, etcetera. Then they put me up there, and I spoke for 10 minutes or something to the crowd. It was just a swirl of things, a blur of things that happened after. It was an amazing time.

Q: Were we concerned about the Muslims in Italy at the time? Because Italy has always had quite a few Somalis and others coming in and at that time how did we get in from Europe various elements of the embassy and also from the Italian police, how did we deal with the Islamic community there?

POPE: Especially in Milan, there was a lot of concern, around Milan. There were others in other places but it was especially in the North. There it was one mosque in particular that was not a grand, beautiful, real mosque like in Rome but was kind of a backyard, garage-type mosque, very radical. And the Italians had been, the Italian authorities had been concerned about that one and ones like it for some time and so. But security was the preoccupation of everybody inside the Embassy. I remember pulling together the Law Enforcement Working Group that had been revived prior to 2001, and I was really glad I had because we had many, many agencies. We had almost 30 agencies of the U.S. Government and several of them were independent law enforcement or enforcement-related type entities like Customs and FBI. Whatever they had been doing, everybody went to work on whatever we could find, both about 9/11, if we could, but as well as what is going on inside of Italy and our own self-protection. And the Italians, I remember, pulled resources off of other things they were working on that were important things to them to put resources on this, on potential threats that they worried about.

Q: I am sure we probably were not paying much attention prior to this but afterwards, the Saudis had a policy of supporting schools in madrassas and Italy.

POPE: I do not remember that being an issue; I do not remember that coming up. It could have, it could have been there and we just were so overwhelmed with 9/11 and our own protection that we were not reaching out a little bit farther to that; I do not know. I do not recall it.

Q: It is the sort of thing that really is, after the initial shock, as we started taking more and more a look around, including right here in Washington, we started saying what are they teaching?

POPE: Oh, it is a definite issue.

Q: And you know, the Saudis were our friends but they had made a pact with the devil.

POPE: Yes, it was an issue for sure later on, especially after I left Rome and came to Counterterrorism, it was certainly something that a lot of people were looking at. But in the early days, right after 9/11, the very end of 2001 and early 2002, that was far off the radar scope, if it was present in Italy and I just do not remember whether it was or not.

Q: When did an ambassador arrive?

POPE: December '01.

Q: So during the really very critical time you were it.

POPE: I was.

Q: What was happening as far as, you know, I mean, obviously Afghanistan and the Taliban were sort of the heart of the al Qaeda apparatus and Iraq was a completely different issue but got involved. How did we treat those two things vis-à-vis the Italians during the time you were there?

POPE: Iraq was not on the scope while I was there, but Afghanistan was overwhelmingly on the scope, and the Italians not only completely supported us but wanted to be involved. They wanted to send planes, troops, ships, something.

Q: Were there any particular, I mean outside of support and all, were we trying to do anything with the Italians, either on terrorism or anything else during this sort of end phase of your time there?

POPE: Sure. I mean we had extremely good intelligence and law enforcement working relationships with the Italians, who are very good, by the way, they are very good, especially in areas where they focus. They knew a lot about the Balkans, they know a lot about North Africa, and we had long, long standing relations and working efforts with them on law enforcement, working on the Mafia. We always had a very strong FBI presence in the Embassy, the Legat was really good, he had worked on mafia issues in New York, our Legat, and he was excellent.

Q: When you say Legat?

POPE: Legal attaché. But he was in fact, he is the senior FBI guy. Not every embassy has an FBI presence, only a few, but some of the larger ones do. We had a robust FBI presence long before 9/11, over the years.

Q: You know, you had the mafia and camorra and all that sort of stuff.

POPE: That is right. We supported the Italians, they shared information with us. We had an excellent relationship there and on the Intel side. The Italians were highly praised as not only wanting to cooperate but actually having something to cooperate with, having really a solid and very effective intelligence apparatus. And so all of that was to the good when 9/11 hit and we were working 20 hours a day, all parts of the Embassy just about trying to see what they could share, sharing information with them and at the same time trying to secure ourselves better inside the country.

Q: Were there any incidents or problems during this time that you could think of?

POPE: Well, there were a lot of different things that happened. There was one where some guys were arrested with maps and they insisted that they were just tourists and they had the American Embassy circled on a map. Now maybe they just wanted to come see how beautiful our embassy was, but there were others who thought that they maybe had other things in mind. I think that group was expelled. The one that got the most press and actually was amusing was the supposed effort to tunnel under the Embassy and poison our water supply. And that came about because there was an apartment somewhere in Rome and some guys were discovered in there and they also had a map with the Embassy circled but also there was a tunnel- Rome is riddled underneath with tunnels and a lot of them date back to Roman days and then on top of those there are others that are newer. And a lot of the utilities are carried there. And right behind the embassy there is a big tunnel that does not go under the Embassy property but parallels it down one of the main streets and crosses over Via Veneto and keeps going somewhere. It carries phone and sewer and water and all kinds of different pipes down there. And people are not supposed to be able to access it because what they have done is they have built walls inside these tunnels and you have to go down into a specific section, through a manhole in top, and you have to get a permit from the city to access the manhole, and then you can go down and work only in that area and then you have to come back up and then get a permit for the next manhole. And what some workers do is to get one permit and then go down and knock a little hole in the wall in between the sections and go through and then knock another hole so they can just go up and down and work on the different parts of it.

Well, the authorities for some reason were alerted to this apartment. Nobody even knew who the original tenant was because it was one of these things where guys just kept coming and going. And out on the patio in a closet they found a couple of bags of fertilizer, so somebody decided- and the American Embassy was circled on the- and ammonium nitrate or something- was circled on this map and also these tunnels had a couple of circles and something about the water supply of the Embassy. And so the authorities looked down in this tunnel and saw a hole knocked and had decided that these so-called Islamic terrorists had gone down into the tunnels and somehow knocked the holes themselves and were going to drill through to the Embassy and poison our water supply with these two bags of fertilizer that were out on their patio. But the thing is, going from the wall of the tunnel, not the walls that were made to block off the tunnel but from the side of the tunnel into the Embassy was solid earth and rock and it would have been a huge, and it was many, many feet, effort to dig from that tunnel in all the way through and into the Embassy and find the water supply and then dump a couple of bags of fertilizer in it. And what I understood was there was a lot of pressure in that system and if they somehow had actually been able to dig through all the dirt and rock, many, many feet to get to the thing and then had tried to punch into it, they would have been knocked over like a fire hose with the pressure coming out at them and they would never have been able to get anything into the system. But for days, the press was going crazy. The Italian press I could understand, because they do get very excited, this was the tunnel and water plot. And I had the phone ringing off the hook. But a U.S. paper had a journalist out there who just loved the story and I said the problem is that while we have had some threats we were concerned about, this one is ridiculous, it is not real. The paper printed it anyway, and then of course the Department was all excited. So it worked both ways. We had some very concerning moments.

After 9/11 we had to have several what I call "Town Hall" meetings because there were many employees who were really concerned, Italian employees, particularly, who were really worried. And I can remember telling them, honestly, we are doing everything we possibly can and the Italian authorities are doing everything they can but the reality is this. This is the American Embassy. You saw what happened in East Africa. We are a target and we are doing everything we can, but I cannot promise you that nothing will ever happen. I come every day. My office is right facing the street on Via Veneto. My wife comes every day for her language lesson. I have not stopped her from coming, and we are just going to go forward here. And I pray that none of you leave us, because there has been some talk and people are so scared that they might stop coming, they might leave our employment. I said we value all of you and we want you to stay, but if you are that worried maybe you need to go to work for the Swiss Embassy or Swedish Embassy or somewhere where you feel that they will not ever be a target. We are a target and we are doing what we can, but I cannot promise you nothing will ever happen. There was a lot of that and also the other thing with the schools.

There were a lot of people who were very courageous about themselves but then where the children were concerned they get really nervous, and so there were lots of school issues. And fortunately one of our two RSOs, one of the two senior RSOs, had children at the school and was really well plugged in. He did a great job of calming the schools down and helping me calm the parents down, because there was a lot of people going into orbit over the schools even though they were pretty courageous about themselves. So it was an amazing time.

Q: What sort of security- you were the Chargé, what sort of precautions were around you?

POPE: Well we already had around the house, around the Residence, we already had permanently stationed carabinieri with guns and vehicles around before 9/11 hit. I had a detail front and back and an armored car and so none of that changed; they were just less willing to let me do what I wanted. I used to like to walk to work, and they sometimes would let me but once 9/11 happened the answer was absolutely not, no walking.

Q: One of my great pleasure when I was in Naples was walking the streets, I walked almost every major street in Naples but you know, after the Red Brigade got going I had to stop that.

POPE: Rome is glorious. And on weekends they would sometimes let you sneak out to walk the dog.

Q: Is there anything we can think to cover about your time there?

POPE: In Italy?

Q: In Italy.

POPE: It was just terrific. One thing that was a real concern when I was first there in particular was the fallout from the military jet disaster up in the north, that had happened before I came, but it was still reverberating; it was horrible.

Q: You might explain what this was.

POPE: Yes, this was a Marine jet that was on a routine training flight up in the north and for some reason was flying very low in a valley. As I understand it, the plane clipped a cable car line for skiers and 20 skiers fell to their deaths. And it was a huge flap and the Italians rightly were just outraged by it, Italians of all stripes, not just the more leftist ones, everybody was just outraged about it before I got to Rome. It reverberated for a long time, it was still reverberating when I got there.

Q: Well as I recall too the Marines involved tried to and even some of their superiors tried to cover up some of the details of this, at least that is the impression I was left with.

POPE: This all happened before I came but the press claimed that the pilots were on a joy ride. That is what the public seemed to believe. But as I say, it was before my time and I just know what I read. The trial was taking place while I was there and they were acquitted because they said their altimeter was not working. That really caused outrage; no one could believe they were acquitted. And I am not casting aspersions on that because I do not know exactly how the military court system works and I am sure they got a fair trial and that people did the best they could on it, but I just know the public reaction and politicians; there were lots of speeches and protests in the Parliament and in the newspapers and it was a big deal for quite awhile.

Q: What was your impression of, realize it is a relatively short time but how the Berlusconi Government took control. I mean, were there changes that you see, appreciable changes?

POPE: Well they were focused on trying to modernize the economy and of course they were overwhelmed immediately with the G8 Summit. They got through that pretty well, because it had been well planned and they grabbed it and got on top of it and took care of it. And then, just like President Bush, initially Berlusconi was not so focused on foreign affairs. He had more domestic ideas in mind and so did they about reforming the Italian economy. For example, their law does not encourage larger, more efficient enterprises. It encourages small enterprises because if you have, as I recall, 15 or fewer employees, there are a lot of different regulations you do not have to meet. If you have 16 or more, you have unbelievable kinds of taxes and regulations and things. So what they would do, instead of having an efficient company with 150 employees, they would break it into 10 small companies of 15 each. It was just very cumbersome and Berlusconi was trying to fix those things and bring Italy into a more modern economy when 9/11 hit.

Q: Well then you left in December.

POPE: No, no, no, I did not. The new ambassador arrived in December.

Q: Ah, yes. When did you leave?

POPE: June of '02, the next year. The new ambassador was terrific, by the way.

Q: Who was the new ambassador?

POPE: His name was Mel Sembler. He had been under Bush 41, the ambassador in Australia and I heard from people that he had done a terrific job. You know very well that political ambassadors are a mixed bag, as are career ambassadors. Some are really smart and terrific and serious, and some others are not. He was one in the former category. He had done a really good job in Australia, by all I had heard, and he proved it when he came out because he was very serious, worked hard, came to work every day, read everything, listened to everything we had to say and then asked questions and was very serious; not only did all of his duties you would expect him to do but he went to national days, he went to a lot of national days no American ambassador usually attended. Of smaller countries and smaller, less highly ranked countries. Went to national days where an American ambassador had not been seen in years and that was highly appreciated by the smaller countries. And so he did a really fine job, he was an excellent ambassador. He was experienced too, but he was serious.

Q: Yes, well he knew the trade.

POPE: And he had been part of the 2000 campaign. Jim Nicholson, who succeeded Lindy Boggs, I mentioned, we had two terrific ambassadors to the Holy See, and Lindy Boggs left and then we got Jim Nicholson, who is now the Secretary for Veterans' Affairs. He had been the head of the 2000 campaign for Bush. He is a war veteran and businessman and he was excellent, really superb. And Mel Sembler, who had already been the Ambassador to Australia, had been the finance chairman for George Bush in 2000 and had come out and was really doing a great job during the six months or so we were together, and I know he carried on very well. He was highly regarded by the Italians, by the way, who just thought he was terrific.

Q: Just as an aside, I am sure all our ambassadors and staff had problems explaining the 2000 election with the disputes and all. I mean, Americans were astounded; this must have been hard to, you know, I mean here is the great American democracy and people are looking at hanging chads and all this.

POPE: Yes, it was pretty difficult. Like most embassies do, we had a big party, we had rented a ballroom at the hotel next door and had a huge election night party and the Democrats Abroad had a little table and they were all wearing straw hats, and the Republicans Abroad had their table and wearing straw hats and there were balloons all over and big TVs with reports coming in from different states. We were going to break up around midnight, I remember, and there were lots of reporters there and confetti and all the stuff you would expect. About six in the morning, everybody was exhausted and had bags under their eyes. I finally said this is not going to be solved in awhile, everybody just go home and try to sleep a little bit. So everybody went home and slept a couple of hours and then went to work.

Q: Oh boy.

POPE: Little did we know where all this was going to go with Florida and hanging chads and all of that and the Supreme Court. We just could not imagine it at that point. But the Italians were really interested in it as it unfolded, of course.

Q: Well then you left in say June?

POPE: Yes.

Q: Where did you go in 2001 or 2002?

POPE: To our little country house in Sweden. My wife is Swedish and we have a little country house and I went to unwind and rest.

Q: Ah ha.

POPE: You know, people say Rome is so wonderful and it is, it is just as great as it gets. But it is a pretty big job because like I say, we had almost 30 agencies and 800 people and three decent sized consulates and it was a big job and I was pretty weary. Little did I know how weary I was going to be but I was glad to have a little time off.

Q: And then what happened?

POPE: Well then I went back to Washington to become the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism.

Q: Ouch.

POPE: Ouch.

Q: How long were you doing that?

POPE: Three years. I was scheduled for two but I got talked into doing a third.

Q: So you did it for three years; essentially you retired at the end of that?

POPE: That is right.

Q: This had been what- so we are talking about the fall of?

POPE: August of '02.

Q: '02.

POPE: Until April of '05.

Q: Essentially what was your job?

POPE: Wow. The Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism has existed, by the way, since around '79 or '80. It long predates 9/11, although it was really small in the beginning and has had a number of very distinguished leaders but really blossomed after 9/11 in size quite a lot. It went from a small office to something like 100 people, and we were essentially, if you think of the Department of Homeland Security, as the principal coordinators and overseers for the homeland, our job was to coordinate not only activities of the Department, the various bureaus for example, but also more broadly to try to coordinate the activities outside the United States in the rest of the world of the U.S. Government, counterterrorism activities in the broadest sense. We were not trying to direct the DOD or the CIA, you must send 10 guys here and 10 guys there; none of that. But it was coordination of broad policy.

Q: Who was the head of this in the State Department?

POPE: When I first came, for a very short time, it was Frank Taylor, who then went on; we were just together a month or so. Frank went on to be the Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, DS. And then after a few more months we got a fellow who had been the head of the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, CTC, a fellow named Cofer Black, who was retiring from the CIA and came basically as a political appointee to succeed Frank Taylor.

Q: How did you find the bureau when you got there?

POPE: Internally, for maybe the first year, I spent a fair amount of time, because this office had really mushroomed in size after 9/11 from a pretty small office.

Q: I am sure as Principal Deputy you are essentially the DCM for this operation.

POPE: I was, that is correct.

Q: In other words, you were in charge of the operations but, I mean, personnel and-

POPE: Personnel and organization and trying to figure out whether we were internally broken down correctly or did we need to do something else. For example, once DHS was created, Department of Homeland Security, and then they had an OHS over in the White House, Office of Homeland Security, that later became the Homeland Security Council, kind of parallel to the NSC, I realized that we did not have a proper plug-in for that in the Department. Everybody assumed we were the plug-in in Counterterrorism, but there were others like Consular Affairs and different parts of the building and in Economic and Business Affairs, they had some relationship with Treasury on some of the money freezing, finding and freezing terrorist assets and there was no 100 percent natural plug-in although it was mostly assumed we were it. And so, among other things, bureaucratically trying to make sure we had the right set up and the right people because we did not completely have the right mix of people. And so yes, I was the inside man, particularly the first year, and Cofer Black, when he came, was the outside man. He was already well known and had already sat on the Counterterrorism Security Group for example, CSG at the White House, he had already sat on that as the head of counterterrorism at the CIA so he knew all of those folks, his FBI equivalent and all of those, so he moved really well into that. He did not know the Department, of course, because he had come from outside. He was a terrifically talented officer and Cofer had spent his career, a lot of his career doing counterterrorism long before it was on almost anyone else's scope so he was well suited for that and I of course had had a career in the Department and knew the Department, so it was a pretty good division. I spent a lot of my time working on bureaucratic stuff, backing him on meetings, on personnel issues, as we had turnover trying to get even better people. Because we were getting a lot of bids, a lot of people who had not bid in the past were now looking at S/CT after 9/11 as a much sexier place to go and so we had good people and also trying to get more positions because everybody was working really late. I can remember many nights, 10:00 at night, going through and just instructing some of the younger people, you must go, you have a family, you have got to go home. And they were a very dedicated group, some of them were. And also for example, we had three principal divisions inside Counterterrorism and one was the equivalent of the political section, they were doing the policy, and another was doing the assistance and public diplomacy, the assistance working with the ATA program of Diplomatic Security.

Q: ATA?

POPE: Anti-Terrorism Assistance. That predated 9/11, went way back to 1984.

Q: This is training foreign-

POPE: And training foreigners to be able to do counterterrorism properly, training particularly in the developing world, working in Africa and Southeast Asia and different places. And so there was an office that also worked with them that did that kind of thing plus public diplomacy. And then there was a third sub-office inside Counterterrorism that was all military and it was either active duty or former special forces. It was all special forces people and they were the relationship with the Pentagon, with JSOC (Joint Special Operations Command) and with special forces down in Tampa with Black Ops. The Department's Political Military Bureau was the relationship with the military and open operations and training and that kind of thing, White Ops.

Q: When you say Black Ops, these are covert actions.

POPE: Yes, that is right. And so I brought in a former ambassador, a career guy, to be the head of that because they had had a military guy and it seemed to me that we needed a State person heading that office even though everybody else was either active or former military so that is the kind of things where I spent part of my days. And the first year was really difficult. I was learning, too, because I had little background other than what I had picked up in various posts, especially in Rome, but I had no deep background in counterterrorism like Cofer Black, and I can remember everyday, I was learning about new groups I had never heard of. I mean, everybody had heard of the Red Brigades and all of those groups and then of course now al Qaeda, but everyday I was hearing about new groups that were dangerous and were a problem in one part of the world or another I had never heard of. I was drinking through a fire hose, as they say, and learning at the same time about the substance as well as doing the bureaucracies like a DCM.

Q: Well I can see, I mean, just the one part but you are talking about the, sort of the military section there why you would want to put an ambassador in there because, I mean, you run across operations, the military, essentially has a mindset, we have our own mindset, the military has a mindset, here is a problem, let's do it. And often, I mean, if you try to do something in a foreign country it does not work because you have not made the proper, you might say, diplomatic presentation, realize the sensibilities and all that and that is why you would want to put an ambassador there. Am I putting words in your mouth?

POPE: No, you are not. You are right on the mark.

Q: I mean, this is always, and sometimes we are too cautious, you know, oh, we do not want to do that because it will disturb somebody and sometimes it has to be done but at least you have that perception put in there and then to weigh it.

Well let's talk about, you know, particularly as you get farther along, what can you talk about that we were doing on counterterrorism? Your office.

POPE: The President was correct in my opinion. There were a few things that were really obvious. One was Afghanistan, that was the first thing that had to be done and that was done before I got there. That was just necessary, there was no other place on the earth where Al Qaeda had that kind of unfettered training bases and planning and safe houses and all of that kind of thing; that was the obvious thing. But there was a whole other stream, a kind of global stream that needed to be done, because everybody realized that even though we were the so-called super power we could not, we did not have the resources, even if we wanted to try to do it, to find every terrorist hiding in every village in every country in the world, break every cell. It could not be done. It had to be done by the local authorities, by the national authorities, wherever it was, whether it was Indonesia or Kenya or wherever, could not be done by the United States. We were overwhelmingly engaged militarily in Afghanistan, later in Iraq, but we just could not do that in all of these countries. We could push them and support them, and the President decreed that there would be a lot stronger law enforcement cooperation, enhanced intelligence sharing, a lot of enhanced training, capacity building for counterterrorism; for example, helping a country create a counterterrorism police unit that was somewhere between the military and the cop on the beat that was not either one of those things but was something else, or helping countries that wanted to do the right thing and find and freeze terrorist money, helping them train bright young people from their finance ministry or the banks and give them the proper computer programs where they did not have it. They had the will but not the capacity. So there was a lot of that. And of course liaising with the military and preparing the way where they were working. They were not all working in hostile environments like Afghanistan and later in Iraq. I mean for example, there is a big presence in the Horn of Africa in Djibouti and they were working very productively with Kenya, Ethiopia and others. Everybody was keeping an eye on Somalia with great concern and working with our ambassadors in various places, pulling ambassadors together in regional conferences with the military and sending our ambassador out from our military group out to join-

Q: Who was that ambassador?

POPE: Ambassador John Dinger, excellent, excellent guy who had been our Ambassador in Mongolia and previously the deputy spokesman. And John, very sophisticated, he is now over working with Nick Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs. John was very good, and we sent him to a lot of these things. And at some points, we were interpreters between our ambassadors and the military. Not that there was friction, but that they sometimes did not quite understand each other, and John was very good. I also served in this role sometimes. I would get calls on the secure phone from ambassadors and I understand that somebody is coming down from EUCOM, the European Command in Stuttgart, and going to propose such and such a thing. Do you know about this and what do you think about it? If we knew about it and thought it was a good idea, we had a lot of credibility with ambassadors. And there were times when we did not know and it was the first time we had heard that somebody might have an idea on the military side to do a program with a host country on something. So it was a work in progress about how to make all of this work in the most efficient way. Everybody was trying to do the right thing, but it was a swirling mosaic.

Q: But you had things such as, you know, it came out after 9/11 but the fact I am an old consular officer and sort of the FBI, CIA were not sharing with consular affairs some of their lists of bad people because we did not- so we were issuing visas in the blind and all. And you had the problem that there had always been this sort of friction between the FBI and the CIA and the State Department was kind of left out of a lot of things. Did you find yourself working in that environment or was it a changing environment?

POPE: It had changed to a considerable degree, at least in the will and the intention by the time I got back. Because I got back almost a year after 9/11 and there had been a lot of stove-piping inside the government. That is that military expression where information flows up and down inside a department or an agency but not across to others. And the White House decreed, correctly again in my opinion, that there would not be this stove-piping, you could not fight this war on terrorism that way. And by the time I got back and was sitting in on these interagency meetings, already at the pretty senior assistant secretary level, you had people who were very open to sharing information, working really well together already. It does not mean the bureaucracies had adjusted all the way down, but it was certainly on the way and new things were being created like the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, TTIC, which later became the National Counterterrorism Center, a big operation that goes on now and is improving all the time. The NCTC and the various kinds of lists that are trying to be amalgamated and coordinated lists of various names; that whole business was very hard because even with the best will you had lists with overlapping names. It was a huge amount of work to get them all straight and then you had names, you had peoples' names that were say Arabic names that you had to try to transliterate into English and you might get one letter off and either snare somebody who was completely innocent or miss somebody. That whole thing is much harder. And the American public rightly would say, well why don't you just meld all the lists, you have got computers, do not you? But it is not nearly as easy as it sounded.

Q: Running a consular section, at one time I had a small one in Dhahran and just to have immigration files on people whose name is Mohammad.

POPE: Right.

Q: Mohammad bin Ali, you know. I mean, we sorted them out by place of birth and date of birth. The inspectors told us we should not do this but the hell with the inspectors. I mean, we did it because it was the only way you could sort out the people.

POPE: Exactly. You understand the kind of difficulty I am talking about. And there was the National Non-proliferation Center and various kinds of tracking centers that were set up, and gradually it got smoother and better. But by the time I got back almost a year after 9/11, I felt like the will was there at the senior levels to do the right thing. You read stories, for example, that the FBI, the average FBI guy resisted doing counterterrorism, that the average FBI guy had been brought up to fight the Mafia and organized crime and that kind of thing and that is where they were comfortable. I do not know whether that is so. But that is the kind of thing that you hear. Whether they were fully cooperating, whether the average CIA guy was fully cooperating with the average guy in the FBI, I do not know. Certainly at the Coordinator for Counterterrorism for the FBI and the Coordinator for Counterterrorism for CIA and the Treasury and Department of Transportation and State and DOD and all of that, at that level people were spending more time together than with their own families and were bonded at the hip and were cooperating extremely well. You know, we were in on Christmas Day and we spent a lot of time together.

Q: You point out as you are dealing with this, I mean, much talk and it is now extremely political but still it is called the war against terrorism.

POPE: Yes.

Q: But it seems to be outside of fighting in Afghanistan and all, leaving Iraq completely out of this at this point, that the war against terrorism is essentially an intelligence and a police war.

POPE: In my view, yes, you are correct. But not everybody agrees with you.

Q: Not everybody agrees. And I can see you have got this huge, in the first place, money goes to this, you know, when you get right down to it, power is money and money is power, from Congress. And you have got this huge military establishment, which obviously wants a piece of the action yet in a way there is not a hell of a lot, I mean, in my prejudiced view, there is not a lot of room for military action except when you have- I mean, did you find this a problem?

POPE: That is exactly it. That was a major part of my activity was military-related things. In addition to the bureaucracy which got straightened out pretty fast, dealing with military related issues was a big-time consumer for me.

Q: Because you know, a Navy submarine is not going to play a big role in the role against terrorism.

POPE: That is right. But you mention the Navy. The Navy felt it had a role to play and did because there were lots of stories that bin Laden not only was a multimillionaire and had all these troops that he could call on, etcetera, but that he also had his own informal navy. There were a lot of ships, allegedly, that were al Qaeda-related ships or belonged to some front company that actually was al Qaeda behind the scenes and that they were transporting guns and explosives and stuff back and forth across the Mediterranean and different places. And the Navy set up MIOs, Maritime Intercept Operations, in various parts of the world to make it harder for the bad guys to move things by ship, move people and guns and explosives and things by ship. And as long as they were careful and did it with all the respect for the rules of the sea and all of that, it seemed to me to be a good thing.

Q: Yes. But I mean, did you find that, you know, everybody kind of wanted to get in on the action?

POPE: Absolutely, including in situations where they were not the appropriate instrument, like you said. And it was definitely a problem, especially this particular Pentagon has been very aggressive under Secretary Rumsfeld and wanting to basically have the lead in war on terrorism well beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, and they were not suited for it. That is as bluntly as I can say it.

Q: Yes, well I can see it because it is very obvious that what we are really interested in is how well the French police perform in breaking up cells or whatever it is.

POPE: This particular White House is very enamored of the military and is overwhelmingly focused on the military. It may be in part because they use this term "War on Terrorism." And what I explain when people ask me about that, because I speak a fair amount on counterterrorism now that I am out, I say that "war on" is a term that is popular in the United States and it means something. We have had the "War on Drugs" and the "War on Poverty" and the "War on Illiteracy" etc. and it does not necessarily mean war in the same way you think of it. It does in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it does not necessarily mean that. War on Poppy Growers does not mean you are sending in tanks. But in my view, this is more like fighting the Mafia, more like fighting organized crime, because you do not have a country and you do not have a flag, you do not have uniformed troops. What you have is a couple of places where the military is predominant and then the rest of the world, under the coordination of the U.S. ambassador, you have law enforcement coordination and intelligence work, usually with the cooperation of the local government, not always. But it is not the kind of thing where you can send in an aircraft carrier to go after a village in some place that is a sovereign country other than Iraq, Afghanistan which are special cases right now.

Q: You know, sort of looking at the world, well let us take Latin America. Did Latin America play much of a role?

POPE: Least of any region. That does not mean it was not something that we kept some eye on but it was the least of any region. Obviously there had been some incidents, there were a couple of bombings in the '90s in Argentina of a Jewish center and another Jewish target, two Jewish targets, I think it was in '94. And so yes, and they were traced back to Hezbollah. There was an area in particular that concerned us and that was along this, I do not see that you have the map of it right now, but along this area of the borders of Paraguay, Argentina and Brazil called the Tri-border Region.

Q: Yes, I see it over here.

POPE: Yes. The Tri-border Region, right there, Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina where the famous Iguazú Falls are. There is a little area there that is kind of a no man's land for law enforcement. It has a lot of Lebanese businesspeople, and probably the majority of those people are law abiding people who are just going about their work. But it was an area of concern to the three countries involved, plus us. And we actually created a group that had not existed. Globally we were using channels that existed before like the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE, ICAO, International Civil Aviation Organization in Montreal; we were using channels that existed, but this was a little informal group that had no international standing we called the Three Plus One. It was Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and the United States, and we met a couple of times a year, rotating where we met, just to exchange information, papers, status on where we stood on this Tri-border Region and what was going on in there. At a minimum you had funding going back to bad guys in Lebanon. And we were concerned that because it is relatively close to home that we might find other types of things being planned in that region.

Q: Plus this is a significant area for smuggling, I mean, traditionally, this is big time stuff.

Well let's move around. How about Africa? We had the bombings of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam and other attempts in Kenya, I think, were not there or not, while you were there? I mean, where do we see a problem in Africa?

POPE: Our biggest concern was East Africa. Well no, let me take that back. A principal concern was East Africa because of the nearness of Somalia and because of some elements in Kenya along the coast. And so I think the Ethiopians were pretty much on top of what they were doing. Ethiopia was a good ally and was really trying its best but had a long border and it was a struggle for them and there were a lot of real bad guys in East Africa.

Q: Do we see Somalia, at this point we had left Somalia, I mean, it was sort of in chaos but was it a chaos with an Islamic terrorist overtone at that time?

POPE: No, at that time it was mostly controlled by warlords, but there were elements of concern we needed to keep an eye on. We did not have an embassy there but to the extent we could we needed to keep an eye on and try to keep them from coming across into Kenya or other places. It was an uphill struggle and there were some groups there that were at least al Qaeda-inspired, if not more, and it was a real worry. And that is not the only place in Africa either.

Q: Okay. Well what other places?

POPE: Well North Africa was an issue. You had the GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) which had been fighting the Algerians for a long time and had killed a lot of people.

Q: These were the fundamentalists who went around cutting throats.

POPE: Had killed a lot of people in Algeria but also were operating in other countries, in Mali and Chad and different places like that because the central governments had weak authority out in the more remote areas. And the Algerians were getting on top of it; they were beginning to break the back of the terrorists and were beginning to have them melt off into other places. Not so much in Southern Africa, we kept an eye on that and not so much in West, could have happened, still could I suppose, but particularly in North and East.

Q: Well were we concerned about, I do not know if you want to call it leakage from North Africa into particularly France but also Spain and all, of radicals coming up at this time because these were people who, you know, there had been quite a few arrests and there were bad bombings in Madrid that came out of, I guess Morocco.

POPE: Well the Madrid train bombing, done by guys of that ethnicity but who were Spaniards, who lived in Spain. So yes, sure we were concerned about it.

Q: Did you get a feeling, sort of from your diplomatic connections, that as we were looking, I mean we, I am talking about the sane West as opposed to the extremist groups in say in France and Germany and England and all, as their police forces beginning to look in were they sort of aghast at what they were finding? I mean, did you have a feeling they were uncovering things that they had not really realized were there before or were they pretty well attuned to it beforehand by the time you got there?

POPE: I cannot recall their being aghast about it. I think they had some idea. Maybe after 9/11 they began to look into it they realized maybe they had a bigger problem than they had thought. But I do not think they were too surprised about what they were running into. You know all the stories about "Londonistan" and the banlieue of Paris. Everybody knew there were real problems there. You did not have the kind of assimilation that you have in the United States with a very loyal Islamic community in the United States, assimilated good Americans.

Q: How did we find working with our European allies? Were they- police forces, had you found, I mean, had they been stove-piping or was there a problem of getting everybody cooperating, not just with us but also within their own forces? Did you see a change going on?

POPE: Well some of them were frustrated, Europeans I am talking about, some of them were frustrated by their own countries' laws, where they would do a good bit of police work and actually catch somebody they believed was going to be doing a bombing campaign and then for some reason they could not be held. There was frustration about some of their own internal laws which some of them felt were a little too soft. But in terms of cooperation, I am sure in every country you have rivalries like we have had in the past between FBI and CIA. I am sure there have been those rivalries inside the European countries. But my main impression and recollection is really good cooperation between us and the specific intelligence and police services we were working with. People got it. I remember when there was a lot of public furor back and forth as we were clearly going to be going into Iraq and then after we did between President Bush and President Chirac and President Bush and Chancellor Schroeder, Schroeder in Germany; there was a real level of tension up there but in terms of the professionals, not. The professionals cooperated well. The French were very good, for example. The professionals understood very well that they were a principal prime target just like we were, and we worked well with them and the Italians and the Brits and the others.

Q: How about with the Russians? The Russians had their own fundamentalist problems in Chechnya. Was there, I mean, they did their thing, we did ours or how was it?

POPE: Well, we had an official dialogue just as we did with China, for example, on counterterrorism where we would meet and exchange information and that kind of thing. My recollection was that it was pretty good, the cooperation, cooperation with the Russians. They had their own focus, which was overwhelmingly Chechnya but they understood that they were a potential target for more than just the Chechens. So we had pretty good cooperation with them.

Q: How about, particularly in the Far East you have got Indonesia, which seems to be, I mean, it is an Islamic country, the largest Islamic country, I guess.

POPE: Correct.

Q: During the time you were there, how did we find working with Indonesia?

POPE: I came not long before the Bali bombing and up to that point what you had across a lot of Southeast Asia, obviously the Chinese had their own issues, Japan, the Australians got it but in Southeast Asia what you had was a lot of turning the eyes away, no terrorism here, do not know what you are talking about, we do not have any of this. And then after the Bali bombings-

Q: This is when I guess there were several places frequented by mainly Australian tourists were bombed and hundreds were killed.

POPE: That is right. About 200 people were killed, including some Indonesians on the island of Bali in October of 2002. Up to that point, not only the Indonesians but others were saying not here, maybe in Afghanistan or something but we do not have any terrorism out here. Well then that pretty much faded away after the Bali bombing and the Indonesian police general who was put in charge of that did a very good job of unraveling that really quickly. And then it was episodic, up and down because all of those countries, just like here, we have our own internal political dynamics and they had their own internal political dynamics and then there was a change of government and I think you had a stronger commitment to it. It was kind of a mixed bag and we were sometimes encouraged and sometimes we were frustrated. They had this group out there called Jemaah Islamiyah which is primarily in Indonesia and is the principal terrorist group out in that region and they have as a goal creating an Islamic caliphate in that region of the countries in that region, including parts of the Philippines, parts of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and they would take this, this, this-

Q: We are talking about the lower part of Thailand and Malaysia including all of Indonesia and Brunei.

POPE: And southern provinces of Philippines and creating an Islamic caliphate out there and everybody understood that they had been behind church bombings in 2000 and who their leader was. It was episodic but he would be arrested and let go and he would be tried and given a light sentence. It was frustrating but generally it was moving on.

Q: Going back sort of the main show that has consumed us here in the United States and that is Iraq, at the time how did we view, you know, sort of how did you and others around you view Iraq vis-à-vis terrorism? I mean, you were there before we went in, were you?

POPE: I do not want to speak for everybody because I am not sure how everybody viewed it.

Q: Alright, well speak for yourself.

POPE: Just stepping back one little bit, beyond terrorism, I mean there were two main issues. One was weapons of mass destruction, and one was terrorism. They were not unrelated because pretty much I think everybody assumed that Saddam did have weapons of mass destruction, pretty much.

Q: Because he had them before.

POPE: Because he had them before and had used them and not nukes, not nukes and that there was some reason that-

Q: Poison gas.

POPE: Yes and chemicals and biological but not nuclear weapons but others and that there must be some reason why he was being so difficult with the UN inspectors and frustrating them. He would not do that if he were not trying to do something. So there is that issue and of course the issue, I felt, was not whether he had them but what were his intentions? What was he going to do with them? Was he doing to either himself try to use them against us in some way, try to deliver those against U.S. forces in the region or to try to sneak some kind of a weapon of mass destruction into New York City or Los Angeles, which in my view would have been suicidal because we would have found out, come in and taken him out. Or give them to somebody like al Qaeda or the like who would, he knew would do, use them in some way against us, which also would have been suicidal because we would have found out and come after him. There was either that outcome or that he was really actually deterred and that he did have them but he had no intention of giving them to anybody, bin Laden or anyone else, or actually initiating something against us because he liked his palaces, he loved torturing his opponents, he wanted to maybe retake Kuwait someday and was deterred. And so, if he had them but was deterred, then he was not an immediate threat to us. Only if we actually got real solid evidence, not cherry picked evidence but real evidence that he was actually going to use those against us, then we should go take him out.

Q: I might point out for somebody reading this in our expressions today, to cherry pick means to, well, would you explain what cherry pick means?

POPE: Yes, just to take little bits of selected information out of, maybe out of context or without analysis attached to it that would seem to support a point. And you can do that with anything. I mean, you could take this transcript of your remarks and my remarks and take a sentence out here and there and could completely turn it on its head if you wanted to. So if we had gotten information that was real information and not wishful thinking information that he actually had these weapons and really did intend to try to use them to kill half a million people in New York City or something like that, then absolutely you have to take him out. So that is the WMD side of it, and I personally never believed that he was that crazy. I thought he was more of a Hitler-type dictator in the sense, you remember Hitler loved his Eagle's Nest and his different retreats, luxury retreats and moved around and killed a lot of people and captured other people's countries; that is the kind of dictator that Saddam was - cruel, vicious but not suicidal, I thought.

The other piece was the terrorism. There is no question that the Saddam regime had had ties with the terrorism in the past. For example, the terrorist who was responsible for the capture of that Italian cruise ship out in the Mediterranean, the Achille Lauro, and killing of an elderly American gentleman, Leon Klinghoffer, because he was a Jew, throwing him overboard, the terrorist responsible for that was captured in Iraq, in Baghdad when our troops went in there. Saddam had never made any secret that he was sending money to families of suicide murderers, suicide bombers coming out of Gaza into Israel and then sending their family, I think it was around \$25,000.00 afterward, to encourage others to do that; blow yourself up, not only do you go to heaven but your family gets money. So support for that kind of secular terrorism, if you see the difference between that and allegedly inspired by Islam, although it is a perverted version of Islam. So there was that but there was, I never had seen any real proof that he was, that Saddam was involved with al Qaeda or 9/11 or Islamic type. Because Saddam was really much more in the mold of people who were a target of bin Laden and not allies. Bin Laden was opposed to the Saudi royal family because he thought they were apostates and he hated the secular Arab dictators who were not religious and Saddam certainly was not. Every now and then he would be photographed at a mosque, but you could tell that his heart really was not in that; he was not a religious person at all. And so I felt like he was more of a target than a helper and there was talk of Zarqawi going there and getting medical treatment. I thought was true at the time and now it seems that it was much less clear; certainly he did not have his leg amputated and a prosthesis on his leg but even if he was in Baghdad for some period of time he was not al Qaeda at that point. He was affiliated loosely with Ansar al-Islam, which was a sort of affiliated kind of group but he was not al Qaeda. It was only much, much later, after Saddam was gone and we were in Iraq when Zarqawi kind of reluctantly pledged fealty to bin Laden and al Qaeda and said okay, I recognize you as the big chief if you will recognize me as the head of al Qaeda in Iraq. They made a kind of devil's compromise. But Zarqawi was not al Qaeda; he was a foreign thug from Jordan who I think had over time, before he was killed, had begun to think of himself as the ultimate successor to bin Laden, the gun who would be the top dog on the global stage but for now it was Iraq and also Jordan. You remember he was responsible for the bombing of that poor wedding party at the hotel and those kinds of things. So that is a long way of saying that I cannot remember any real evidence of al Qaeda involvement with Saddam or vice versa. In fact some of his associates later just insisted and apparently were deemed credible by people who had interrogated them were deemed credible, that he wanted nothing to do with these religious fanatics and did not cooperate with them.

Q: Well did you sense at the time and you arrived, the drum beats were beginning to come, particularly from the White House and from the civilian side of the Pentagon, for going into Iraq. The State Department had put considerable effort into looking at a post-war Iraq if that happened, I mean, in other words, but also was not apparently sold on going into Iraq. Did you sense any of this going on, the division between sort of the war hawks and the let's not do this thing regarding Iraq?

POPE: Sure. I sensed it. We just were not very involved in it because we were not very focused on Iraq. Saddam was out there and he was a horrendous murderer and butcher who had killed hundreds of thousands of his own people and a lot of Kuwaitis and deserved to rot in hell but it was not a terrorism issue and we were not really focused on it. We were focused a lot on Afghanistan, of course, and Horn of Africa and other parts of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, etc., but not Iraq.

Q: On terrorism, did you view, I mean, the Israeli-Arab, Israeli-Palestinian situation, you had terrorists there and one could almost say on both sides, I mean, the way things were going there, but was that sort of outside your purview?

POPE: No, it was not outside the purview but it was, it seemed inspired by different- Nothing was outside our purview. We focused some energy on South America; what I did not mention earlier was a very specific piece and that is the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia) in Columbia, who were not Islamic at all, basically had deteriorated to become narco-kidnappers and so we devoted some attention to the FARC because they were terrorists. And so sure, we were of course interested in terrorism in that region and focusing and we liaised closely with others in that area.

Q: Were we concerned about-

POPE: But it was different because it had a different inspiration. Coming out of Gaza, for example, it was not Islamic radical, so-called, self-proclaimed Islamic radicalism.

Q: Did you see a reflection of the Israeli Palestinian thing, particularly from the Palestinian side, as affecting- I mean, there is a considerable Palestinian community in the United States. I mean, we lost a political leader, Robert Kennedy, his assassin was a Palestinian, Sirhan Sirhan. I mean, were we concerned or seeing a reflection of that conflict in the Palestinian community in the United States?

POPE: I did not. I do not know. If you ever interview anybody from the FBI you can ask them.

Q: No, I am not, I am just wondering whether you were picking up some of this or not.

POPE: I never saw it. I never saw that. What influence that had was we would be told by interlocutors around the world, including modern interlocutors who would say if you guys, meaning the United States, would only fix that problem, the Palestinian-Israeli problem, if you could just get that solved that would help, that would go a long way or would solve terrorism. And what I would answer back to that is, it definitely in its own right is something that deserves to be fixed, we should all devoutly wish that it be fixed because it is right for the people of the region of the Palestinians, the Israelis to get a peaceful settlement that everybody agrees is fair, etc. But you have to understand that our principal global adversary at this moment is Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda. And bin Laden went a very long time before he ever said a thing about the Palestinians or that conflict; he was focused on the Saudis, focused on the U.S., Russians much earlier. And it was only much later when he began, it was like a light went off in his head and he began to say, oh yes and by the way, I am also doing these things for those guys over there, the Palestinians. And I remember Arafat, I wish I had saved the quotation, I remember Arafat very shortly after that came out and said not us, no way, we do not want any help from him and we are not involved with bin Laden in any way, we are not accepting that he is doing any of this in our name. Of course, if you got a peaceful and widely accepted settlement to that conflict, of course it would help in all ways because even out in Indonesia it would dampen it; it is felt out there and it is a source of unhappiness and friction and it probably helps recruiting of young people who are radicalized in some way by it. So of course it should be - it would be a good thing to have it solved but it would not end - there are people who say that would end terrorism. It is just not so because bin Laden never gave a damn about the Palestinians or focused on them. But of course we paid attention to the various groups, the Hamas as well as Hezbollah.

Q: Was there any pressure on you as the drum beats went for war against Iraq for the counterterrorism to produce something to show that Saddam Hussein was a terrorist and an external terrorist or not?

POPE: I do not remember any pressure like that. Either I have blocked it out or we did not have it. The way the bureaucratic structure was we were reporting directly to Deputy Secretary Armitage and then to Secretary Powell. We did not go through the under secretaries, etc. And I just cannot think, I cannot recall any such pressure from them. I cannot imagine that they would have. They are just not the type to have said we want you to cook something up; they did not break that way, they were real straight shooters, those two; Powell and Armitage were great bosses.

Q: Just one, maybe last question, how about Cuba, when you were looking at Latin America, was Castro at all a factor anymore? Because he had been.

POPE: Zero, zero. They were still on the list, on the terrorist list but the reality was that it just was impossible to take them off politically. I cannot remember anything coming out of there. Hugo Chavez was more of a factor if you want to talk about that because he was openly harboring one of the major FARC leaders, openly in Caracas. Castro was just a complete non-entity at that point and he was still on the list of terrorist countries, you know, that list of seven bad guys; he was on there because he had been put on at some point in the past because they had harbored some IRA (Irish Republican Army) people, I think.

Q: And way, way back they had tried a landing, I think in Venezuela, I think, which had gone nowhere.

POPE: Yes. But it was just impossible to take them off for political reasons.

Q: Was the IRA out of it too?

POPE: Yes. I have virtually no recollection in the three years of anything to do with the IRA.

Q: Well, I am just trying to think, is there anything else that we maybe should cover during this time?

POPE: It was exhausting, it was stimulating, it was really worthwhile. I think what the American people do not understand is how hard people were working and they say, you know, Washington is all messed up and the White House does not know what it is doing and State does not know and DOD does not know and DHS is a mess but we were doing a lot of this on the fly. We did not really know where we were going in the sense of have it all planned out years ahead. The Cold War, once it settled down and we got containment right kind of went along in fits and starts and it was pretty much the same all the time as long as nobody made a mistake and pushed a button and launched a missile; it was still pretty much the same. But we were figuring this out as we went. And people were working incredibly long hours trying to keep this country safe and find the bad guys and put them out of circulation.

Q: Well you know in many ways the proof of the pie is in the pudding and yes there have been, in the United Kingdom there was a bus bombing and the Madrid railway bombing but essentially there are a lot of guys out there planning but nothing, you know, very little, you know, a lot of plans but very little has come out. You know, I have sort of the feeling that when you have a successful bombing it is a couple of guys get in a pick up truck and doing like the Oklahoma bombing, you know, getting some fertilizer and diesel oil and going out and kind of doing it without a lot of planning and cell phoning back and forth and all this. In a way the real threat is our assassins in the United States is usually a loner or a couple of loners getting together and doing something. Was this the feeling?

POPE: No, I do not think so. There was always that possibility and certainly everybody expected that even once Al Qaeda had been essentially dismantled from the organization it had been in 2001. Because it has been, it was and has been; you still have the top two guys out there but it has essentially, in its organized structure been taken apart, but even then you certainly had possibility for a terrorist-inspired duplication of the sniper business. You know, those snipers who were around Washington or replicating something like the poor Israelis endure where a terrorist gets on a bus with a vest or walks in a restaurant or a shopping center, something like that. It was certainly expected that we would be having a rash of those things or at least some of those kinds of things because they are impossible to prevent. The Washington subway, you get on the Metro everyday and you see people with backpacks and briefcases, everybody is carrying something and it is just sort of luck of the draw. You cannot protect everything.

And bin Laden to the extent he can still do anything while he is on the run and hiding out up in the mountains of Pakistan, I think he is there, I do not know, but if he is, to the extent he can his energies are still focused on us. He would still like to do something. And people say either we are so great, we are so awesome at this business that for five whole years we have prevented them from doing another attack, which I am not at all convinced of, or that they just have not chosen to do one. They have got infinite patience and they have not chosen to do one. I am not completely sure of that either because some of these tapes that bin Laden sends out, only audio tapes from him for some reason, which is an interesting question, why doesn't he do video like Zawahiri does? But these tapes, I think in part, are to say I am still here guys, you know, look at me, I am still relevant, I am not irrelevant hiding out up in a cave. I think he is still trying to keep his name in front. Why they have not done another attack, I do not know. He should have, if he really wanted to continue to be a major leader of this thing, he should have done something before now. I think that is why Zarqawi was not really loyal to bin Laden. I think it was kind of okay, okay, I recognize you as the boss but you recognize me as the head in Iraq. I think it was kind of grudging and he pictured himself secretly in his head saying the old man up there is washed up; it will not be long before I am running the whole show. I think that is what he had in mind and so bin Laden is desperate, I think, to continue to appear relevant in some way.

Q: You mentioned a country that I did not ask about, Iran.

POPE: Yes.

Q: How did we see Iran during the time you were there?

POPE: They officially are listed as the principal sponsor, state sponsor of terrorism in the world. But unlike Cuba, which is still on the list but as kind of pro forma, they really are and they are really looked on not only officially but in reality as the principal state sponsor and they are. They have harbored Al Qaeda although they have a kind of love-hate relationship because my recollection was of putting some of these senior leaders including bin Laden's son under house arrest and then they would let him out and then they would take him back and then they would let him out. And also their influence if not control over Hezbollah. Hezbollah is a very serious and very tough organization. So Iran is clearly the principal state sponsor of terrorism in the world and they are always going to be a problem until such time as the people finally get rid of the mullahs.

Q: Well did we see Iran as trying to mess around in Europe or the United States?

POPE: No. Not that I recall. But with the capability of doing a lot because Hezbollah, you remember that famous remark by Armitage, Hezbollah is the A Team, I think he said that in front of Congress or something and al Qaeda is only the B Team by comparison. Hezbollah could really unleash a real wave of terror if they wanted to and they have never declared war on us for whatever reason.

Q: Well then, you retired when?

POPE: April '05.

Q: And what have you been doing since?

POPE: Well I went to work for about a year for a company, defense contractor down in Alexandria. And I found, they were a good company and honest and all of that but it just, it was not right for me, it did not work for me. So I, with all mutual goodwill I left them and got asked to come back to the Department on a retiree basis to do one of these things called an Accountability Review Board. And this past March there was a terrorist attack in Karachi, Pakistan, that killed one of our consulate employees, an officer named Foy. And usually after a terrorist attack in which there is a death, the Secretary convenes something called an Accountability Review Board to take a look and make sure that everybody involved did all the things that he or she was supposed to do. And so I was a member of that team for about two months and we went out to Pakistan, etc., wrote a report, turned it in to the Secretary and then I went off again to our little summer house in Sweden and then came back. They asked me to do another special project, this time unrelated to terrorism, personnel-related project which I have just started on about three weeks ago.

Q: Well great. Okay well, I guess this is a good place to stop.

POPE: Okay. Thank you.

Q: Great.

End of interview